MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

AUGUST 2016

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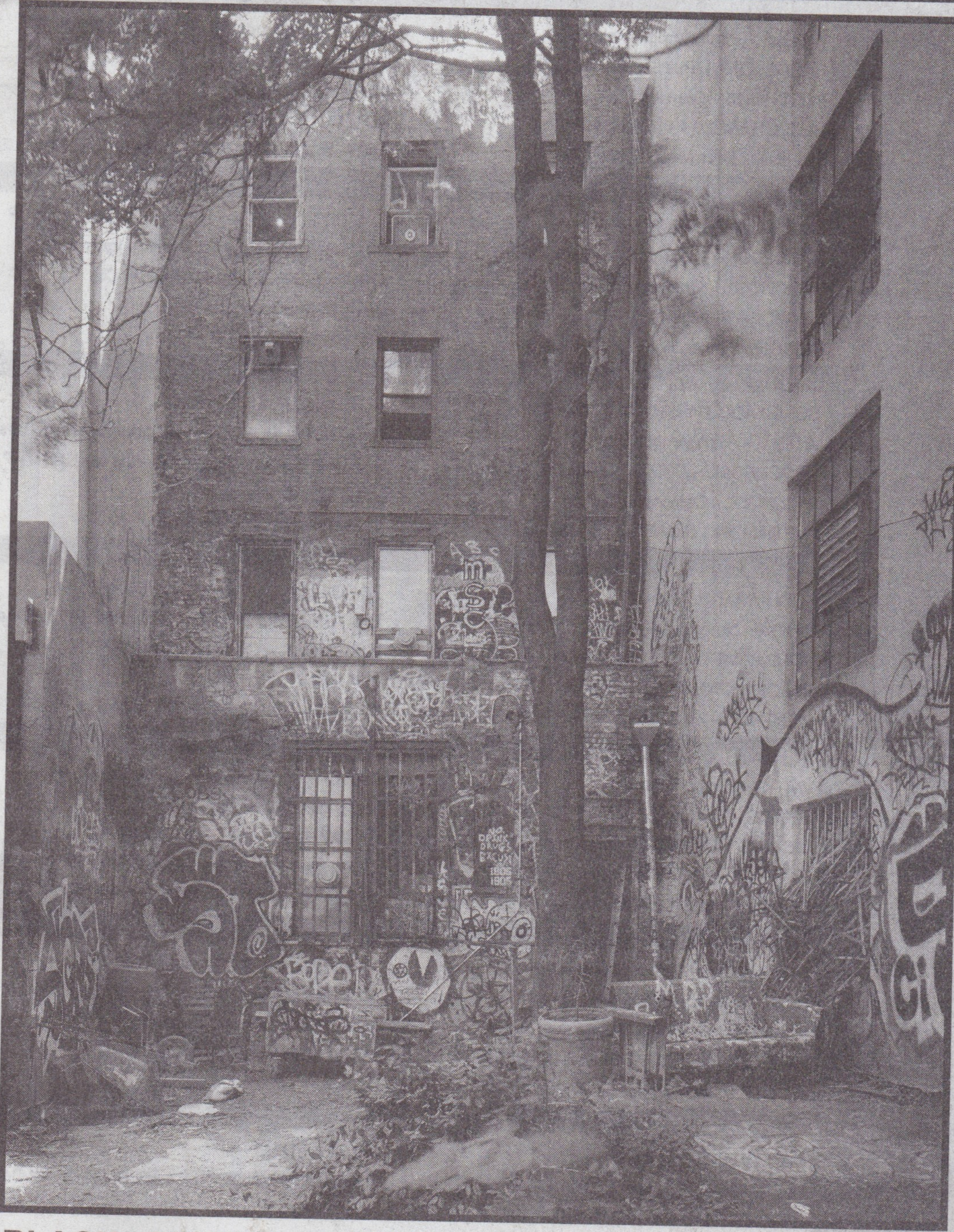

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL TOP 10

For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

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GRACE AMBROSE

WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP
IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
DESECHABLES – La Maqueta LP
LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
HACESJA – Rehearsal in Garage 1.05.90 EP
V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
MENTHOL – Plastic Garden EP / ALMOST 21 – EP
SOMA COMA – Dust 12"
ANTI-STATE CONTROL – Glue Sniffing Blues EP

MATT BADENHOP

RIXE – Les Nerfs A Vif EP
BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP
IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
NERVOSAS – Utility EP
TRIAGE – Power Beat EP
ARCTIC FLOWERS / INFINITE VOID – split EP
MUJERCITOS – Agresivamente Ignorante EP
THE BROOD – October Dreams CS
V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
V/A – Typical Girls LP

MITCH CARDWELL

CCR HEADCLEANER – Tear Down the Wall LP
WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
UROCHROMES / WIZZARD SLEEVE – split LP
IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
THE DANCING CIGARETTES – Dance Dogs Dance LP
SLEEPING BEAUTIES – LP
GIORGIO MURDERER – Holographic Vietnam War LP
RAKTA – "Intenção" 45 / RIXE – Les Nerfs A Vif EP
V/A – Typical Girls LP
V/A – Subnormal Girls LP

ROBERT COLLINS

SUBHUMANS – live
RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"
SOUL CRAFT – EP / TRIAGE – Power Beat EP
BLACK MONUMENTS – demo / EXPLOITED – live
MENTHOL – Plastic Garden EP / FRAMTID – EP
BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP
CULTURE SHOCK – CD / CONTROL GROUP – demo
IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
JFA – live
ALARIC – LP / ELECTROCUTIONER – both EPs

LAYLA GIBBON

V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
GIORGIO MURDERER – Holographic Vietnam War LP
HACESJA – EP / IN SCHOOL – EP
UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – 10-11-12 Demo 12"
RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"
VCR – R.I.P. Sportsboy LP
SPRAY PAINT – LP / RED DONS – LP
CCR HEADCLEANER – LP / SLEEPING BEAUTIES – LP
ALMOST 21 – EP / DANCING CIGAGRETTES – LP

DAN GOETZ

IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
SYNTHETIC ID – Impulses LP
RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"
HIRS COLLECTIVE / PEEPLE WATCHIN' – split EP
WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
FRAMTID – The Horrific Visions EP
TRIAGE – Power Beat EP
MENTHOL – Plastic Garden EP
KORROSIVE – Syövyttävä Laji EP
LYSOL – On the Corner LP

GREG HARVESTER

NATURE BOYS – demo
IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP
WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
BULLNETTLE – LP
UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – 10-11-12 Demo 12"
THE DANCING CIGARETTES – Dance Dogs Dance LP
WOTZIT – demo
FOLLETO – live / KAPITAL – live

KENNY KAOS

THE DAHMERS – Terror on Wheels EP
TERMINAL LICKS – Not Today EP
THE HEADLINERS – Self Love Affair LP
LYSOL – On the Corner LP
HARD LEFT – Economy EP
SICK THOUGHTS – "18 and Free/Choose Death"
RAZZ – Pleasantries EP
PAT TODD AND THE RANKOUTSIDERS – LP
GINO & THE GOONS – "Love and Hate" 45
SLEEPING BEAUTIES – LP / SPRAY PAINT – EP

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TOP 10

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RAY LUJAN

- BAD VISION – Turn Out Your Sockets LP
- ALICE BAG – LP
- GIORGIO MURDERER – Holographic Vietnam War LP
- HARD LEFT – Economy EP
- THE HEADLINERS – Self Love Affair LP
- LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
- PURE HELL – Noise Addiction LP
- ROTTEN MIND – I'm Alone Even With You CD
- SLICK! – LP / UK SUBS – Friends and Relations CD
- DEMOB – live / THE DOLLYROTS – live

MARISSA MAGIC

- WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
- IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
- UROCHROMES / WIZZARD SLEEVE – split LP
- SPRAY PAINT – LP and EP
- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – 10-11-12 Demo 12"
- THE DANCING CIGARETTES – Dance Dogs Dance LP
- CCR HEADCLEANER – Tear Down the Wall LP
- LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
- V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
- V/A – Typical Girls LP

ROTTEN RON READY

- CHAOS TRIBE – Manicomio flexi
- ELECTROCUTIONER – both EPs
- FUCKEMOS – Can Kill You EP
- KORROSIVE – Syövyttävä Laji EP
- MUJERCITOS – Agresivamente Ignorante EP
- MUTANT ITCH – Very Ugly Punk Nonsense flexi
- ODIO – Un Mundo Libero Dall'uomo EP
- RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"
- RIXE – Les Nerfs A Vif EP
- TRIAGE – Power Beat EP

FRED SCHRUNK

- MUJERCITOS – Agresivamente Ignorante EP
- IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
- RIXE – Les Nerfs A Vif EP
- MENTHOL – Plastic Garden EP
- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – 10-11-12 Demo 12"
- LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
- LYSOL – On the Corner LP / WOOLF – 12"
- BULLNETTLE – LP
- GIORGIO MURDERER – Holographic Vietnam War LP
- BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

- UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – 10-11-12 Demo 12"
- THE BRISTLES – Don't Give Up EP
- IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
- SICK THOUGHTS – "18 and Free/Choose Death"
- V/A – Typical Girls LP
- V/A – Subnormal Girls LP
- SIGHTLINES – North LP
- MUJERCITOS – Agresivamente Ignorante EP
- RIXE – Les Nerfs A Vif EP
- RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"

ELI WALD

- BARCELONA – Pueden Ser Ellos EP
- LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
- IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
- WOOLF – Posing/Improvising 12"
- SPRAY PAINT – Feel The Clamps LP
- RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"
- GIORGIO MURDERER – Holographic Vietnam War LP
- MENTHOL – Plastic Garden EP
- CIVIL UNION – LP / SLEEPING BEAUTIES – LP
- TRIAGE – EP / PARANOID – EP

BRENDAN WELLS

- THE DANCING CIGARETTES – Dance Dogs Dance LP
- PURE HELL – Noise Addiction LP
- USELESS EATERS – Relaxing Death LP
- IN SCHOOL – Cement Fucker EP
- SPRAY PAINT – Feel The Clamps LP
- CCR HEADCLEANER – Tear Down the Wall LP
- V/A – Live at Second Empire demo
- LITHICS – Borrowed Floors LP
- BOOJI BOY – demo
- MISCOMINGS – live

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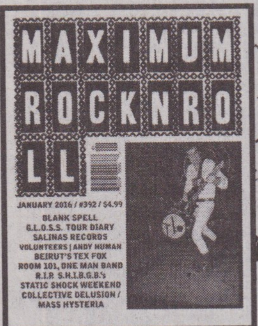
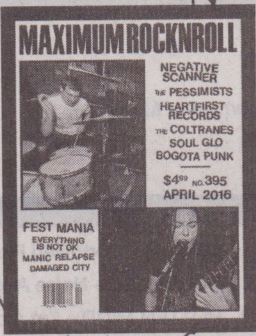


MRR #392/Jan '16

BLANK SPELL from Philadelphia, Oakland's ANDY HUMAN, G.L.O.S.S. tour diary, East Anglian hardcore from VOLUNTEERS, S.H.I.B.G.B.'s retrospective, Detroit's Salinas Records, Beirut's TEX FOX, New Orleans one-man band ROOM 101, photo spreads from Static Shock Weekend and Austin's Collective Delusion/ Mass Hysteria exhibition, Still Not Quiet on the Western Front fest announcement.



MRR #395/Apr '16
FEST MANIA SPECIAL

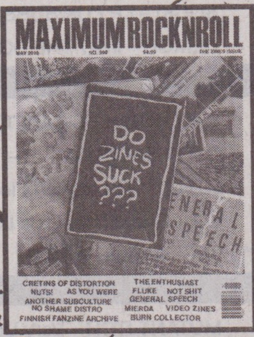
Profiles on Oakland's Manic Relapse, Washington's Damaged City, and Oklahoma City's Everything Is Not OK.

Also: NEGATIVE SCANNER from Chicago, Brazil's the PESSIMISTS, SOUL GLO from Philadelphia, Temecula hardcore from the COLTRANES, Bogotá Punk documentary series, HeartFirst Records interview, and a photo spread by Martin Sorrondeguy.

MRR #393/Feb '16
2015 Year End Top Tens

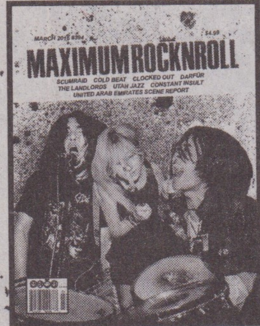
Over two hundred of the year's best offerings in punk, recapped by the *MRR* staff and a dozen guest writers.

Also: the Bay Area's BUSTED OUTLOOK, SCAB EATER from Australia, NYC/Japan's SEI TO SHI, COMMUNION OF THIEVES from El Paso, and a Cacophonie Nights photo spread.



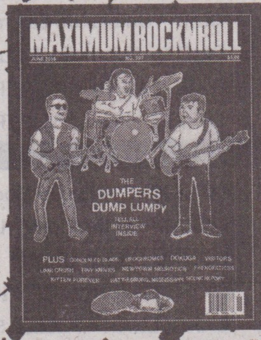
MRR #396/May '16
THE ZINES ISSUE

Featuring: Ohio's Cretins of Distortion, New York City's NUTS! fanzine, comix anthology As You Were, Not Shit skate fanzine, Tom Mayhugh of noisy hardcore mag General Speech, Fluke fanzine (on their 25th anniversary!), No Shame Distro, Burn Collector, the Enthusiast, London audio-mag Another Subculture, Barcelona punk and anarchist zine Mierda, Finnish Fanzine Archive, current Video Zine roundup, Everything is Not OK Vol. 2 photo spread.



MRR #394/Mar '16

SCUMRAID from Korea; San Francisco's COLD BEAT; Glaswegian hardcore from CLOCKED OUT; the LANDLORDS from Charlottesville, VA; Minneapolis's CONSTANT INSULT; Helsinki's DARFÜR; UTAH JAZZ from Buffalo; UAE scene report; This Is Austin, Not That Great photo spread; Ralph Rivera's first column, Brendan Wells's first issue as coordinator



MRR #397/Jun '16

LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS from St. Louis, NEWTOWN NEUROTICS from the UK, Pittsburgh's CONCEALED BLADE, Minneapolis punks KITTEN FOREVER, Western Mass hardcore mutation from UROCHROMES, Vienna's LIME CRUSH, Edinburgh's the VISITORS, '80s Barcelona teenage hardcore from FRENOPATICSS, Portland's TINY KNIVES, DOKUGA from Portugal, Hattiesburg, MS scene report and photo spreads from SIN ORDEN's last show and Damaged City fest.

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From one of our reviewers:

Many thanks to those who always send us two copies of their records. If you don't send us a reviewer copy and your Bandcamp page only allots a small handful of free listens, or worse yet: you haven't put your record online at all, then this presents a challenge for the reviewer to make any meaningful comments about your music and artwork/insert. Taking home a copy of a record is also one of the few perks for shitworkers who do countless hours of unpaid labor per month so that more people can hear about your band. Please send us two copies!

Think and Die Thinking is a San Jose-based collective working to build affordable, accessible, and accountable community in their hometown. They are currently organizing a zine library. Their call for submissions is below. A subscription to MRR *is already on the way!*

We are teaming up with the LGBTQ Youth Space in downtown San Jose to create a portable zine library that will reside with them! This library will be accessible to all youth (13–25) who come to the center as well as those who see it during times that the center shares its portable library with the community.

We are asking for zine donations. We have big dreams of making this library as vast as we can, with as many voices, perspectives and narratives as we can fit. Please share this call and think about donating or telling a zinemaker or distro to donate to the San Jose LGBTQ Youth Zine Libary.

"The LGBTQ Youth Space supports lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and ally youth and young adults in Santa Clara County. We provide a safe space for young people to develop their sexual and gender identities and empower them to realize their potential as valuable members of the community."

We are asking for zine donations that fit these categories:

- Self care and mental health
- Sexual education
- Gender identity
- Fan-fiction
- Art & fashion
- Music: theory, fanzines, skillshare, etc.
- Literature: poetry, fiction, short stories, stream of consciousness, non-fiction, autobiographical, journaling, etc.
- Cultural identity, specifically intersecting with queerness
- Social issues and activism
- Community connections, i.e. zines made during specific workshops

Please send all donations to 452 South First Street, San Jose, CA 95113.

It is hard to follow what is going on at Gilman Street from up in Portland, so I am just going to write about Fang, as that show is a factor in the boycott. I work at a large social service non-profit that operates a domestic violence program and innovative prison diversion and reentry programs. The programs operate independently, and we are one of the few agencies concurrently providing advocacy services to survivors, and cognitive behavioral, mental health and substance abuse treatment to potential—and in some cases known—abusers. The DV program is supportive of any work that prevents or reduces domestic violence from the abuser side, but generally does not want much to do with it. The programs are housed at different sites and there is little collaboration. At times, there is even noticeable tension, and I think a similar tension is taking place at Gilman.

The foundation of prison reentry work, and cognitive behavioral therapy in general, is the human capacity for change. I see a lot of lip service being paid to criminal justice reform by punks and progressives—referencing the Prison Industrial Complex or ideas espoused by Michelle Alexander's brilliant *The New Jim Crow*—yet people's response to actual criminal behavior is often far more reactive.

I am in a band called Piss Test, and we got that name because my first position was working the front desk at the diversion/reentry treatment center and collecting urine samples. I can tell you that many of the program participants are brilliant, caring people. Many are fucking assholes who did shitty things to support their addiction (and probably shitty things that had nothing to do with their addiction). Many are both. The line between good and bad is so blurry it is indefinable. There is personal trauma on top of historical trauma all laid on the bedrock of America's atrocious healthcare and educational systems.

In 1989, Sam McBride of Fang murdered his girlfriend while strung out on heroin. He went to prison—arguable not for long enough—got clean, supposedly did some good work while incarcerated, and is now back to playing music while raising a family. He appears to express remorse and regret for his past. From a reentry perspective, this is a success story, the kind you put in a Federal grant narrative. I don't know Sam, but I would imagine that like most of us punk "musicians," he finds value in playing, especially while struggling with employment, housing, stigma and everything else that comes with being a convicted felon, along with his own personal demons.

Now I am certainly not saying that we should all be apologists for Sam McBride. What he did was terrible, and I can understand why many people would not want to support him. But organizing a boycott of a venue that is allowing him to do something he loves goes against the tide of criminal justice reform. It is adding to the trauma, adding to the repression of America's criminal underclass.

Let Fang play the show. Stay at home. They were never really that good anyway.

—Zach Brooks

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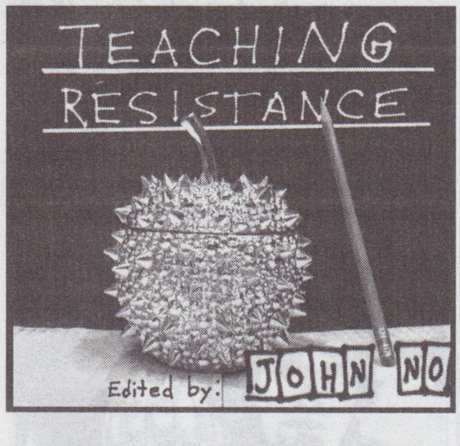


This month's Teaching Resistance is by Eyesore, a teacher who lives in Salt Lake City.

You ever heard that incessant buzzing? The constant gnawing annoyance; like sand between your toes after you already put your socks and shoes back on. A droning murmur that tickles the intricate bones of your inner ear all the way to the base of your skull. Heard that? How many times have you cursed but utilized a system? How many keyboard psychologists can label but fail to self-prescribe a cure? Literally every aspect of understanding existence can be summed up in a few relatively vital syllables…Reflection on outlook is a rebirth of thinking.

But the deafening blabbering sounds of the scene remain as blurry-sighted finger waving from someone never slow to pull the trigger yet end up confidently inflicting personal damage by choking on bullets. Scream until you're coughing up blood, right? You're not the sole victim in this war of words. Damage the credibility of us all; a stalemate with the opposition hinged on paralleled tactics. Revise your battle song merely to continue the standoff with a new topic of interest. Isn't it a bit ridiculous that most people don't realize their worst nemesis is with them every time they look in a mirror?

Rusty and rock-salt-corroded we stand, off-balanced and slumped, the polish that strips red iron and leaves us with that chrome sheen begins with processing the hate bubble gurgling inside the gut and reflecting on where the hell we are and where we want to be. Ever wonder about duplicity in the "American punk scene"; mimicking society utilizing subversive social capital; paradoxically satirizing everything it states to hate, or am I the only one who wants to drown the baby in the bathwater? Deconstruction doesn't start and end with outward and visible society; "my ________ is better than yours" attitudes persist by way of the theory of social learning in all social circles, squares and triangles. Thanks "punk rock" and "activism," you've really help us progress as people; cynical, angry, and defeated. You've given us much to guide our lives with; hypo-DRAMA-niac infighting with the syntax of Veruca Salt. What should I expect; harebrained ideas blindly followed by the half-committed; the rancid reminders of my own youth.

I registered to vote for the first time; I've packed far too many students' book bags with cans of Campbell's soup and snack packs on Friday afternoons not to. Check the stats on candidate demographics and try to rebut. Time to pay attention, there is a psychological war being played against you; "they" are still winning. And we're all that chicken running blindly trying to fit its neck through a hole in the wire fence while the gate is wide open.

Anyway, let's connect the dots between spiteful ranting and education with an e-mail from a concerned parent. "Hey. Thanks for helping these kids think outside the patriarchy box. I think that's awesome. And it sounds like you're clever about it, which is probably good in this particular geographic area. You're a breath of fresh air. Keep doing what you're doing planting seeds." I received this one in my inbox between unceasing ads for all-in-one miracle curriculum scripts a few weeks ago.

It takes a lot of tightrope walking in order to plant those seeds. But to get them to root, grow, and produce an organic antioxidant-laden army of fruit…You've really got to know your shit. Topical current event analysis is fertilizer for this growth; asking what's going on, why, and the bias between the lines. On top of that, I have to teach a living history. This is not the memorization of historical places, dates and names; rather I tell the story with what happened through first-hand accounts to make the concepts come alive and relevant. Kind of like the bands that in finite recorded form are drab (polished) and weak (tracked), yet are mind-blowing live; the tangible trumps the mimic. It's pretty amazing how easily you can lead a person to self-radicalize just by informing them about the past experience of humans in their country of birth and allowing them to reflect through dialogue. You really can take nearly any event in American past or present: The Native American, forest service development, class discrepancies, the Mexican Cessation, bailouts, segregation, racism, racism, racism, wars, wars, wars. All aide in forming the "progressive" "humanistic" outlook of another person when taught in antiquities context; on their own regard not authorities. This is the basis of that whole using "history/knowledge as a weapon" thing, but of course this is not the only way we must be armed when our goal is mass destruction.

I get a contemptuous kick in the ass out of the times when I take a conservative topic that directly appeals to the dutifully subservient (the military, corporate interests, etc) and allow them to completely flip their perspective by searching for depth in their conformist training; it's a shallow pool as you know, but kids like the deep end, duh. The best part is I must seem conservative to my students because I don't even share my opinion on a subject unless kids stick around after class and want to hear the plethora of evidence I have to share that this is a white man's world and it has been since the advent of labor, religion, and "the man." My place is facilitator, question creator, and tight-lipped smirker at student quotes as the knowledge bombs drop. It's quite a fun game to be the devil's advocate in the land

of milk and honey. Flies cover the walls; push too much and parents will chase you and will rot out your career like pompous maggots.

The post-radicalization year or two of life is great, you feel like you've unlocked the secret of bondage and servitude and become ideology super hero, but once the high goes away the realization you've been born into a trap insidiously sets in; I teach strategies to aid people in holding their shit together from a young age and acknowledge when it's spilling on to the floor. But I had to accept, learn, and apply that doctrine to myself first.

Like most of you, I absolutely despised being a grade-school student. In "pre-millennial era" South Carolina; the conservatism was stark and abusive. I didn't grow up in no bubble; mine was made of Styrofoam, dish soap, and gasoline, and it's a considerable undertaking to put out napalm's flame. Bullying is in high fashion and tough-love is an excuse for neglect. Countless subtle southern idioms with roots in the history of every -ism you could imagine really can dishearten a student with enough self-awareness to process all the bullshit.

I'm thirty years old this year and on average the conversations I have with ten-year-olds are far more in-depth and rewarding than what the majority of my adult friends can produce. Was the switch just turned off with all my buds? Probably. Anyway, not many know how to safely rewire a socket, so…they're fucked. It's a bummer punk paves a course for personal beat downs; we haven't been equipped with the right munitions to process our encounter with the dark side. Our punk club tells us to lay down our arms, give in, and let stress guide our discourse or, adversely, button-mash attack with nukes. We need strategy to win or more dauntingly just to replenish our will to even fight. Breathe, process, and slow your roll the fuck down.

The wisdom of children to continually question and wonder is, of course, paramount if you strike their interests through opportunistic questioning; skillful prodding will extend a conversation far beyond video games and TV. Kids inertly have a genuine humanistic outlook which translates well when trying to guide them to your own perspective.

Want to experience a glimpse of that anarcho-utopia we dream about but are too neurotic to achieve? Witness a child armed with strategies for solving conflicts. They seek understanding in skirmish because they know if they understand their nemesis they learn about themselves. Proactivity leads to positive consequence. Logic over impulsivity. Facing the hard truth is always the right course. My favorite part? No one kiddo expects perfection from the other, just honesty and expectation of doing what is agreed upon; some call this win-win. I call it a life vest.

I've never actually witnessed someone say this out loud, but I'd love to because I'd jump at the opportunity to win a debate in record time. I've read it coming from a few people with a little too much social-capital for their jurisdiction. That incredibly well thought argument of "laziness is a word created to shame people that are non-productive under capitalism, therefore, it is invalid to think of someone as lazy." Let's deconstruct this for about two fucking seconds; one hundred years ago on this very planet, and today in some places, you'd not be called "lazy," you'd be called "dead" (a student said this). It's okay to be destitute, depressed, disassociated, anxious, annoyed, but remember your child-like honesty and call a dead fish a fucking dead fish…

Note: of course, mental illness is outside of that statement; no matter your circumstance, there are free professional resources available in your city if you're American. Consider contacting a local NAMI branch. You wouldn't want to rewire your entire house by yourself, you'd hire an electrician; the consequence of DIY in some cases may be death.

Regardless, you've been buried alive and "*they*" hold the shovel. Time to pull a Houdini.

Tears of dusty gratification drip, drip, drip from my narrowed eyes to wash away the undertaker's dirt stains from my clothing; rewards like when a kiddo brought me a mug with Milo from the Descendents on it and gave it to me repeating "mug, mug, mug" are the equivalent to blasting every orifice of my body clean with a fire hose. I sneer in villainous fashion as I read thank you note after thank you note for helping a child find meaning and excitement in schooling; my towel.

Here's the real; we're never gonna be whole as cockroaches. We'll survive, we'll annoy, we'll disgust, but we'll always live on the floor and look up at others wondering why they are stepping and we are scurrying and slithering to the sink to survive.

Evolve. Extinction is the rule... Survival the exception.

Paired Listening: D.L.I.M.C. – "Wicker Park" (November Cassingle)

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, punk-affiliated, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.

Recently I read an essay on pure hearing. I was reading it on the bus while listening to music and thinking about personal issues, so the actual text and how I remember it could be in conflict. As I remember, it's not a competency you are born with, like absolute hearing. It's the ability to feel connected to something cosmic through sounds, hearing them in a whole as a part of this greatness of life. It's not in the pure sol-fa fact base. It is also the state where you feel alone; locked out from your presence, locked together with something universal. The act is somehow that your knowledge is given but becomes irrelevant during the experience because you feel the music by embracing your visceral enthusiasm fed by primitive joy. But you have to drop rationality, you can't just slack it through by being and remaining dumb. I float in this theoretical space while listening to the early SPK and DISCHARGE 7"s.

Not that long ago I was at some weird grind show and a kid's damaged earlobe was hanging from the rest of his hearing organ like sausages swinging in an Italian butcher shop. He made me a line of speed laid out on a dirty, framed picture of some biblical painting and then after the snort, a few beers, and some weird grind bands, I headed home. I got bored of watching people sleeping and sweating on E while Dutch gabber music was blasting in a

rehearsal room where this amazing party was taking place. On my way home I was listening to ELECTRIC PRUNES and felt that this music was really and very detailed and life is beautiful since it includes music like this, even if some drunk British tourist was trying to pick a fight with a lot of people but me because I was listening to how beautiful ELECTRIC PRUNES was. I probably looked busy and did not have time to listen to the genius of a random dude who probably was part of another cheap crap bachelor party. Then I browsed further to STATE CHILDREN, who amused me with their bass sound, which is basically the whole point of that record. I got home and watched this comedy with Joe Pesci in which he is a lawyer and I felt that life is somehow alright.

Punk is an enthusiastic genre, but its freedom makes many bands reproduce the same quality time after time. It makes the subculture craft and not art. Let's rise above that reliable and occasionally entertaining mediocrity and let's discuss cool records.

XENOPHOBIA – ***Muerte En America*** **7" (self-released):** The friendly name backs up some hyper-aggressive music. The singer screams as if his voice was a guitar and it simply overshadows everything. Minimalist drums, primitive riffs and pace changing, diverging from very fast to middle tempo. I do not speak their language, so I have to rely on my instincts regarding the international language of writing a hardcore song. Their urgent aggression rules the whole batch of songs and the tension creates a great background noise, a noise which is created as a reaction to a disturbed reality. Has the world become a better place or have we become folks with flaccid opinions who spend our rage on reading sophisticated blogs and crying over well-written articles? I need some pure rage like this even if I'm fat and full of pizza while I write this in my pajamas.

KALEIDOSCOPE – ***Vol. 2 No. 1*** **7" (Katorga Works):** Sourdough travels from bread to bread, getting better and carrying more flavor. The minds behind this group went through many bands and each were somewhere between great and amazing. These four songs are something new while linked to the continuous evoking of the power of…let's call it rock'n'roll. These songs are not drowned into the patchouli stink and hair grease of whatever the James Dean, slim Brando culture is called. It's that pure, pulsating rawness which is the essence of radical beats. This record is trippy without disintegrating. I like to do drugs and battle with the side effects and just laugh and feel alright. This music translates these evenings.

The 012 – ***The White Patterns On Her Dress*** **CS (Funky Weird Tapes):** Heard this band on a comp called *Weird Noise* or something. It is weird and noisy and from England, but it still sounds like American naïve-ism and lo-fi optimism. Or New Zealand weird aggro art rock like SHOES THIS HIGH. I would call this indie music because its center is the out of tune, slapped around guitar, sound collages, boredom, and songs about fishes and parents and work and I guess a lot of stupid art. It could be artsy but it's not high-brow, more frightening and unpredictable. A large amount of the songs do sound like they were recorded from under water, played by the ghost of college dropouts. There is zero sense made among these thirteen tracks—it's a found tape of hallway recordings from an arty squat where people rehearse and argue and joke around and mourn over failed relationships and missteps of the government. No Wave in the UK. Of course you can read more about them on *Kill Your Pet Puppy.*

MURDER – ***Demo 2016*** **CS (Sonic Terror):** DIE? Dead! PERSPEX FLESH is gone and so is NO. Some of the better bands from the UK have disbanded but some of their members went on to form MURDER. MURDER sounds likes a restrained creation who wants to break from it's master. Even though it's strong, it's also unable to live alone in this brutal world. Maybe it's just the drugs from yesterday in me, but the bestiality of this demo is what wins me. It's primitive hardcore drenched into filth and noise and nastiness. It does not re-invent the wheel, and sometimes I don't even know why I like them, but I do like this. Probably because it's smart enough to maneuver the panels of contemporary hardcore, always avoiding a full frontal crash into cliché. If you want to overdose on speed and glue your LAST RIGHTS 7" to your turntable so you can bang your head against the wall, you could also just listen to this demo and spare a hangover while receiving the same experience.

SNOBBSLAKT – ***Anti Disco*** **CS (Ägg):** Only people with dedication and even more spare time would rage against disco. Yeah, okay, I know poppers used to beat up punks back in the day, maybe they still do and I'm just a poser punk under cover in casual dress, but I also like some disco and I don't give a fuck about other people's way of escapism. More than any of this I do not speak Swedish, so I only have to listen to the manic clanking chaos, the total adolescent mangel. Every instrument is racing against each other, which creates a great atmosphere of pointless urgency, the key element of teenage bedroom anxiety that later could turn into neuroticism. This sounds like little kids had the opportunity to do whatever they wanted and they created something great. The slimy voice of the singer tops the whole tape. It's lo-fi enough to let all the instruments blend into each other, thus making chaos a living organism. This is hardcore because it's fragile, it's in danger, it goes against the grain, against the world and the wind. While listening to this demo I'm watching street fight videos from the European soccer cup where Russians are beating the shit out of British hooligans and I'm just so happy that the sonic apocalypse is not the same as this primitive shit. Anti Sport here.

LAITZ – ***Balance Of Power*** **CS (Aed):** Thank you current internet age for showing us that Dutch hardcore was a thing way back then when everything was great and not shit like now. Laitz is another great example of that hyper speed, epileptic guitar, kid-voice-core which makes the Netherlands' hardcore a marvelous thing. The sound quality here is weird, balanced between noise and moderate studio experience. When the instruments sync up it doesn't cover up their scatter-brained approach to punk. This could be thanks to their drummer who plays like two or three people at once. This scene is overlooked but deserves to be among the Italian and Scandinavian bands because of the large amount of pure gold groups, all with unique or landmark-ish sounds. Most of these bands carry the outsider vibe, which is a rare and appreciated feature in American hardcore. Am I old fashioned? I love this sound but nowadays I can hardly find it anywhere in Europe.

DESPERATE CHILDREN – flexi EP (Joy Riders): The flow of this record is amazing. The simple but glue-like drums and bass lay down the bases of bouncing pogo hardcore. Then comes that stupid guitar sounding like an ambulance siren or the slurping sound of inhaling the final drops on the bottom of the glass with a straw. The cynical voice of the singer as he details his love for punk, days spent with intercourse. Yeah, chaos is great. The third song is a cheesy ode to bubblegum punk, with cheerful yelling, and this happy go lucky sonic environment matches great

with the pumped up frustration that was discussed just a few seconds ago. This bipolarism is a punk essential and is captured in a way only insiders could manage. I like it best when the bass goes off in a smart and primitive way with neck breaking enthusiasm only to give space for screaming guitars, but I love chaos just as much as I do punk.

NADIE – demo CS (self-released): First and foremost, a record should be viewed on its own. On that matter, I would say this is an amazing British demo. I suppose the music is played here by women from Barcelona, so with a geographic trick could be said to be the second best collaboration between the two countries since *Morvern Callar.* And here's the thing: how can they synthesize that staple sound? I could hear the rain, the constant boredom, and puking into parka hoods. I can see those blocks of flats and the smart anger. The guitars are jiggling and scratching, the rhythm is monotone but lively, and you can hear there are people behind it, not machines. The apathetic shouting could even come from Orson Welles' trial. The guitar replaces the fire alarm that turns on as these kids set fire to the closest government office.

"I'm just a slob
and I don't care what you think,
I hate it all, cuz it all fuckin stinks!
I'm a regular guy not covered in slime,
I'm not a punk..."
—Mongoloid, "Not Punk"

"They say you're just an awkward kid,
You flipped your lid, you flipped your lid
You love wine like they love cash
Feel your rage spread like a rash..."
—Ramones, "Danger Zone"

Brutal Tactics of the Strong and Free

Once more unto the breach, dear bozos, once more! How was your day? Do you feel fulfilled? Are you slacking off reading this while you should be doing homework or the dishes? Are you reading this on your off-brand generic tablet? Did you download the PDF becuz you have poor impulse control? Maybe you're in Japan where I understand you can get *MRR* on (in?) virtual reality. Witness three hundred and sixty degrees of Imogen Binnie and live inside those interviews of bands you'll never read...unless it's the only thing in the bathroom. And even then you'll only read about two questions before you roll your eyes right out of your head and into your (still gross) virtual reality toilet. Or are you reading this in print becuz you have a subscription and Eli Fucking Wald and the rest of the Get Along Gang took time to send a package to you...You who *never* gets mail other than what? The Penny Saver? Bills? Truancy notices? Maybe an anime newsletter? Or more correctly, you never get mail 'cuz most of it either goes to your mom's house or some dump you lived in two years ago. Punks are losers. But it's cool. You read *Maximum Rocknroll.* And better yet, you read *Maximum Rocknroll* for the Oi! Who'da thunk?! But I'm on a deadline. You get to reading and I'll get to writing. Fill your boots!

NO TIME – *You'll Get Yours* LP/CD (American Oi! / Phobiact / Rebellion / Six Feet Under): I don't know man, this sounds like Oi! made for punks. Oi! is a subgenre of punk, I know. But what separates the wheat from chaff is an alternate view of the same shitty world. Even wack RASH bands still sing about anarchism from a skinhead point of view...Or something. On *You'll Get Yours* you get songs about hating cops, hating politicians, hating "fence sitters," hating frat boys, hating work, hating oogles. All pretty standard fare. But fa'real, bands need to start naming names. Who is a fence sitter? Where do you work and why does it suck? What interactions have you had with the police? Write about specific events. Write about concepts even. This feels like shit you should learn in 9th grade English. Concrete imagery and all that. And really, NO TIME is from Pittsburgh. We have like 700 cops for the whole city. Being a white dude, I could walk downtown and burn a couch on the sidewalk out in front of the BNY Mellon building and get away with it as long as I was wearing a Penguins jersey.

But that's not the point of this waste of ink is it? The music is thoroughly Oi! Even though this is like wine made by Miller, I smell notes of 86 MENTALITY, STARS AND STRIPES, and (of course) that No Future UK82 sound i.e., BLITZ. One of the best tunes is "Bow to None": *"We'll bow to none, we'll take no shit / Hated and fucking proud of it / You think you know, you don't have a clue / Fuck your ego and fuck you, too!"* The bass is dark and rumbles along nicely with the gruff vocals. The drums set a mid-paced marching cadence. Good song. If this album gets attention I'm sure it will land on a few top tens of 2016. Just not mine.

HOSTILE MINDS – *Violent Society* CD (Rebellion): This is Tom Boutwood from ARCH RIVALS, a one-man project turned full band. We here at Wilkinsburg HQ dig ARCH RIVALS to no end, but HOSTILE MINDS have won us over as the preferred band from Plymouth, UK. Their sound is stripped down early '80s-loving Oi! with raspy strained vocals and a raw overdriven guitar tone that made the Gang start throwing around names like LONDON BRANCH, CONTROL ZONE, and SKIN DEEP. Last year the band released a three-song EP entitled *No Innocence* and those tracks are included with six new tunes to round out the CD. Bands such as HOSTILE MINDS add weight to the dictum "Skinhead's not a fashion, it's a way of life!" Oi!

TOP DOG – CD (Rebellion): Well. Rebellion Records just keeps the hits rolling, don't they? This is like Epitaph '93-'95. Anyway...Leeet's go! TOP DOG is back! Last year their *Welcome to My World* EP made my top ten. And these geezers don't disappoint with their new outing. Like the above review, TOP DOG found it necessary (helpful?) to include their last EP on this CD. It doesn't detract in the least. Those songs have been rerecorded and are still as hard and catchy in classic brick-wall fashion as the first time around. The nine new songs keep it rooted in the back alleys and housing estates of Carlisle, Cumbria. The picture that is painted is one of struggle and pain. The song "House of Pain" is a condemnation of domestic abuse, while "Father Like Son" deals with the cycle of poverty that afflicts poor communities. "Shoot to Kill" is about gang violence: *"Gang mentality will always rule / Born in the playgrounds of our schools / Teachers and parents don't know what to do / Government they ain't got a clue / Shoot, shoot to kill / Kids kill kids, it's criminal!"* The song "Monster" addresses a revolving door prison system. TOP DOG also has a great ability to keep well-worn themes fresh and exciting. It takes some brass to title a new song "ACAB" but they did and it's a burner. You also get "Were You a Bootboy" and "Carve Her Name with Pride," an ode to all female skinheads. Add this to the pile of great new British Oi! bands.

IMMORAL DISCIPLINE – ***Tried, Tested, Strong and True*** **CD (Crowd Control Media, Rebel Sound):** Whoooooa! It's IMMORAL DISCIPLINE! If you don't know, they were on both the original *US of Oi!* and *Spirit of Oi! American Style* comps from '88 and '89, respectively. Two albums that defined the sound of American Oi! Damn. This is hard to review. Some of it is so very good. And some of it is just dumb. A couple people reading this won't be able to tell the difference between the two (get to Wrinkle-Fest you dweebs!), but this album ain't for you anyway. Here's the good; read these lyrics to the title song: *"Tried, tested, strong and true / Pride in our nation, the red, white and blue / United we stand from the old to the new / American Oi! lives on thru me and you!"* Yes! Sumthin dumb? The lyrics to the song "Worthy Things": *"My friends, my family, my alcohol and me / Oi! Oi! Oi! / My friends, my family, the only worthy things that I can see!"* Not terrible, just dumb. They also have a song called "Life's a Bitch (and So Are You)"—it's about a person who won't stop complaining. I was never the dude reading a book at the bar, but I was also never the dude who wore his sunglasses on the back of his head. Two of their classic songs are updated, "The Whole World's (Still) a Battlefield" and "(More) Boots and Braces, (More) Stars and Stripes." Do I care that IMMORAL DISCIPLINE hasn't really changed in almost 30 years? No. Not at all. I'm not their wife. All I have to understand is that I'm not the music I listen to. If you can get past the smell of cologne covering up Budweiser, you'll find one of the best American Oi! albums this year.

And once again I've hit my limit! Next month we got a reissue of a long lost NYC Oi! demo and a split featuring two bands of 211 Bootboys representing the newer breed of NYC Oi! Plus a whole lot more! Be here next month to see what we get away with!

ENDNOTES:

1) I don't get any hate mail. You are proving a lot of people wrong. Be the first: AMERICANBOOTGANG@Gmail.com

2) The SPLC aren't skinheads, they aren't even *punks*, so why should we care what they have to say about Oi!? Buzz off.

3) But we do care when Brendan Wells says, "Turbo is my favorite columnist but I don't actually listen to Oi!" Thanks homie! I still don't like URANIUM CLUB.

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

Imogen Goes To Los Angeles Part 1

Day Negative A Hundred Or Something: I get an email from a television producer who has read the novel I published a couple years ago. She asks if I'd be interested in being a staff writer for an upcoming TV show starring, among others, Laverne Cox. I mostly laugh it off. Of course I will move to LA to be a TV writer for Laverne Cox—it's just that, y'know, I'll believe it when I see it.

Day Negative Sixty Or Something: I graduate from graduate school. Now I have a master's degree in counseling psychology and sixty thousand dollars of debt. I have been doing an internship at a psychiatric hospital, working on an LGBT-specific unit. Among other things, I've been doing a trans group every day. Now that I've graduated, I've been hired to do group therapy all over the hospital on these wild twelve hour long shifts on Saturdays and Sundays. It's going to be intense.

Working on an LGBT-specific unit of the hospital is a pretty different thing from working, as a trans person pretty much anywhere else. I expect some degree of cruelty.

But I've worked in bookstores for the vast majority of my adult life. For a year I worked at a domestic violence agency and felt like I was making more money than I could even conceptualize. My girlfriend and I were living in a tiny, cold cabin on a mountain, paying $200 a month in rent, and suddenly I could just walk into the grocery store and spend sixty dollars without worrying about it. I felt rich and then I quit that job to do my unpaid internship at the hospital, spent all my savings, and then sponged off my girlfriend for a year. This job I am about to take, at the hospital, pays even more than the domestic violence agency did.

Almost immediately I start having disorienting episodes of heart palpitations and shortness of breath.

Day Negative Fifty Or Something: I get another email from the television producer. They still want me to come work for them. Nothing continues to be confirmed.

I really like doing group therapy. Nobody on the non-LGBT units is cruel to me, or at least nobody is cruel to me in a way that's hard to shake off. I am good at holding space for people; I am not afraid of mental illness; pretty much all I ever want to do is to help people to understand that they are not fucked up, it is the world and the culture they live in that are fucked up. I get to do this in therapy. Sometimes I get to preface statements I make with "Look, I don't want to turn this group into Imogen's Radical Politics Hour, but..." Mostly though I get to validate people who feel fucked up because fucked up shit has happened to them—to give people a chance to talk about shit they've been judged for their whole lives and not be judged. It's a powerful and fulfilling experience for me. It's also exhausting, although I am not able to admit this to myself yet.

Days Negative Forty-Five Or Something To Negative Twenty-One Or So: I have a strange, brief telephone conversation with the television producers in which they tell me how much television writers are paid (an absurdly large amount) and that there's still no guarantees but that they're still trying to make it happen.

I continue to really like my job. My heart palpitation and shortness of breath episodes continue to get worse. Alex and I go to see *Captain America: Civil War* and I can't tell if I enjoy it or not because I spend the entire movie having a panic attack about these physical symptoms. I think I don't like *Captain America: Civil War* very much. There are too many characters.

Alex loves it though. She has only recently been able to articulate that one of her favorite things is watching enormous, bald men like the Rock and Bruce Willis beat the shit out of each other with wrenches and stuff—she has five separate *Die Hard* tattoos—and while this is not that, it is probably close enough.

Day Negative Twenty Or So: I admit to Alex that I had a panic attack for the entirety of what felt like a four-hour movie. My dad has a pacemaker. He can't drink any more. I think: I have barely accepted that I am aging, but do I now have to admit that I am old and that my heart is failing? The more I freak out about freaking out, the more I freak out.

I should go to the doctor but I won't have health insurance through work for another couple weeks. I decide that it is probably worth whatever it costs out of pocket to have my heart examined, because if it explodes I will be dead and the money I'll have saved won't matter anyway.

I don't want to go to the doctor because in my experience going to the doctor as a trans person is frequently a total fucking nightmare. Just like everybody else, doctors frequently engage with trans people as if we are crazy and stupid for failing to be cis people. But again: it would be worse to have my heart explode than to be condescended to as if I were crazy and stupid. So I go to the urgent care place.

I have a good experience at the urgent care place. They acknowledge that I'm trans but don't do anything annoying and then I explain my timeframe; I explain what's stressful; I explain my family history and the fact that I don't exercise. Alex and I have been trying to get pregnant for almost three years and I have been off hormones the whole time; we are trying to figure out how to buy a house, what house to buy, what it will be like to be in that much debt on top of my exciting new student loan debt. They don't suggest that I go to the emergency room. They barely suggest anything. I press the doctor and she proposes that I could keep a journal of when these events are happening: what sets them off, how long they last, what's happening when they start to fade. It's not until after I've left and I'm in my car that I realize how gently the nurse and doctor have communicated their actual diagnoses:

Imogen, your heart is not going to explode. You just need to learn to chill the fuck out.

Day Negative Twelve: The television producer emails: "Good news. Call me."

I call her.

I have to be in LA in twelve days. This is not enough time to give the hospital two weeks notice, but because I work a weird weekend shift and it is a Wednesday, it'll just barely work out.

She asks if I have an agent. I almost laugh. She offers to have her own agent do contract negotiations. I'm an asshole.

I have mentioned to a few of the other social workers at the hospital that there is a weird long shot chance that I might end up getting a job writing for TV. I end up having to disclose that I published a novel and that I write for a punk rock magazine they have never heard of and that I have a weird kind of subcultural...visibility, or something. I don't know. I laugh it off. It had been kind of nice to just be some idiot who worked at the hospital but I guess it is also kind of nice to be some idiot who has done some stuff.

I email my supervisor and explain the situation. I actually feel like writing for probably the most famous trans woman actress in the country is not that far removed from doing therapy in a psychiatric hospital with trans women or with all this writing that I do which is intended, at some times more explicitly than others, to center trans women, and I say this to him because why the fuck not. I also mention that I don't intend to move to LA forever, that this is a pretty exciting way to pay off student loans, and that I'd love to be able to return to this hospital at some point to continue to do this work.

He responds that my work has been great and that I'd be welcomed back "with open arms."

Days Negative Eleven Through Day Negative Three: I work my second to last weekend. There are patients I've worked with a lot over the last year, both as an intern and as a social worker/therapist, and it's hard to figure out how or even whether to tell them that I'm leaving. I feel pretty secure in my ethical framework, though, and it seems like a pretty straightforward decision: just like you can't play favorites with patients in the hospital, no matter how much more you might feel a connection with one patient than with another, and just like how as the facilitator you can't make a group therapy session be about yourself—no matter how relevant your experiences might seem—you'd need a pretty good reason to tell a patient something that personal about your own life.

There isn't really a good reason, but word gets around anyway.

I spend the days between my weekend shifts trying to pack up everything I own and trying to prod myself into an ethical dilemma: is writing for a TV show selling out? Luckily I have built myself a cushion by talking over and over in this column about how I don't think selling out is a real thing. But am I selling out? I'm not really able to have an ethical dilemma, though. I mean, you've got to have a job, right? It's not a bad thing to get paid, or even to get hella paid. I think it's just that people so often do bullshit things with that money. Or to *get* that money.

I'm good at my job at the hospital, but it's easy to let your head swell up when you're helping people and people are acknowledging it. It would be easy to develop a savior complex but look, one of the things that comes up in group therapy, over and over, is the fact that if you're giving and giving and giving and never taking, never giving yourself space to want things and expect things and feel like you deserve things, it will fuck you up. Being selfish sometimes is important and even if you could find a way to be a hundred percent selfless, you'd just be lubricating The Machine with your own emotional labor. At your own expense.

I think about whether it's my duty, as a future rich person, to resign from writing for *Maximum*.

I decide not to. (Might get fired though?)

The second to last day of work, I skip out for an hour to see a house with Alex.

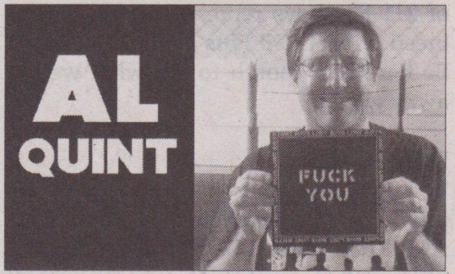
The topic of the last group therapy session on my last day at the hospital is "Endings." It doesn't go that well, I don't think. Sometimes they don't.

Day Negative Two: I spend all day packing and freaking out. We make an offer on the house we saw on Saturday and it's accepted.

Day Negative One: Alex has a midwifery practice so she can't move across the country. We've been together for ten years and lived on opposite ends of the country before; it'll suck, but it'll be fine. We open up a joint checking account. I say goodbye to my dog and then me and Alex fly out to LA together. She'll fly back in a week.

Day One: What the fuck am I doing in Los Angeles?

My heart explodes.



Brandon Ferrell and John Stabb, RIP

I really wish I didn't have to keep writing so many tributes in the past year. The original plan for this one was to write a tribute to John Stabb from GOVERNMENT ISSUE that included an assessment of that band's output, and that will come later in this

column. But a few days ago (at the end of May), I found out that Brandon Ferrell had passed away. He was only 32 years old.

For those of you who don't know who he was, Brandon played in a number of bands over the years—MUNICIPAL WASTE, DIRECT CONTROL, GOVERNMENT WARNING, WASTED TIME, SOUTHSIDE STRANGLERS, SYNDROME, MAD WORLD, PORCODIO, and most recently, COMMANDO. There were also his solo projects, OBSESSOR and MAJOR DAMAGE. And I know that's probably not a complete list. In addition to that, Brandon put out over 50 records on his No Way label and owned the Vinyl Conflict record store in Richmond, VA, before moving to upstate New York with his wife Lauren and twins Zoe and Darby a few years ago. To say he was dedicated would be an understatement. I don't know how he managed to keep so many quality projects going over the years. Just about all of them kicked ass. He could play any instrument—he played drums in most of them, but DIRECT CONTROL had him out front on vocals and guitar, ripping out classic old-school hardcore that's some of the best of this century. He seemed to be a perfectionist when it came to his craft and always tried to get the best out of his bandmates. Kenny from GOVERNMENT WARNING said it was like being in boot camp, with Brandon pushing everyone to reach their potential. Someone posted on Facebook that when Brandon filled in on drums with REASON OF INSANITY, he was given a list of 30 songs and he was able to play them effortlessly at the first practice.

I wasn't close to Brandon but did consider him a friend. We didn't spend much time hanging out away from the shows I saw him at. I met him in 2002, when he was eighteen years old and playing drums in MUNICIPAL WASTE. Even then his talent was obvious. The first time I heard DIRECT CONTROL, I was completely blown away and it was an honor to have had them and WASTED TIME play a birthday show for me in 2008. I know that he wasn't an angel and had a rough go of it in recent years, but one thing that never changed was his passion for punk and hardcore. You can tell that he lived and breathed it and his depth of knowledge was enviable. The one time Brandon came up to our house, when on tour with DIRECT CONTROL, he darted straight for the record room. I remember him taking out a TONY ADOLESCENT AND THE FLOWER LEPERDS album that probably hadn't been played since I got it and demanded that I throw it on the turntable. I have a feeling that if they didn't have a show to get to we would have spent many hours listening to records that he pulled from the shelves. It was like he had a mission to show me that I had records lurking in the collection that should have gotten more attention than they did.

He was always supportive of my work over the years. He gave me copies of just about every No Way release. One of those releases was a vinyl pressing of my old band NO SYSTEM's demo that was recorded in 1985. Just for fun, I had set up a NO SYSTEM page on MySpace in 2008 or so and posted some of our recordings. He asked me to send him the entire 1985 demo and shortly after said he wanted to do a one-time pressing of 1,000 copies. I was a bit hesitant because I wasn't sure the world really wanted to hear a cruddy four-track recording done with what was essentially scab lineup (long story short, me backed by PTL KLUB while the band was temporarily broken up). But he talked me into it. It wasn't a huge seller and you can get it for as little as 99 cents on Discogs, but he must have heard something in it to want to put it out. Not only that, but I put together a lineup for the 2009 No Way Fest (another one of his projects) and it was the first NO SYSTEM show in 23 years. Last year there was almost another one for my 55th birthday show and this time I was going to try to get Brandon to play drums, but it got scuttled when the bass player Biff's van broke down. I really wish he could have done it—having one of the best drummers in hardcore playing in a band with me? How awesome that would have been! I'm really sad I never had the chance to do that. I'm really sad about his unexpected passing and not ever really getting to spend a lot of time with him.

Rest in peace, Brandon...you were one of a kind.

***

John Stabb passed away in early May from stomach cancer after having just been diagnosed in February. He was 54 years old. Stabb was only a passing acquaintance of mine. I first met him in the 1980s and in recent years connected with him on Facebook. I never saw any of the reunions after GOVERMENT ISSUE broke up in 1989, and that includes the one at Damaged City fest a few years ago when most of the original lineup played the songs from the *Legless Bull* EP and 1980 demo. I also missed their first Boston show in 1982 at Gallery East with DOUBLE O and NEGATIVE FX (that band's first show), something I still regret. I didn't get to see them for the first time until 1984 at the famous Wilson Center while visiting a friend in DC. This was just after their second album *Joy Ride* had come out so they'd already started moving past their strictly hardcore origins. Not that they'd ever really tried to completely fit in with the hardcore crowd, even though their early recordings came out on Dischord. From the beginning they never seemed to take themselves as seriously as other bands and there was also an unwillingness to adhere to the fashion trends of the day. That shouldn't be interpreted as not taking the music seriously, but there was never a real tough guy or rigid hardcore image with them. Still, Stabb admitted in a 1985 interview for *Suburban Voice* (done by Gordon and Dave from *WDC Period* zine) that some of his early lyrics had been on the preachy side.

The thing with GOVERNMENT ISSUE is they were always evolving, both musically and lyrically, from the raw energy of that demo and *Legless Bull,* up through the more polished-sounding melodic punk emanations by the 1988 release of their final full length, *Crash*. Consider this kind of a *Reader's Digest* approach to their discography. I didn't include the various live albums that came out during their original tenure. I also skip over the *Give Us Stabb Or Give Us Death* EP on Mystic which was just one live track and four outtakes from their sessions from *The Fun Just Never Ends*.

The 1980 demo, released in 2004 on the Spontaneous Combustion label, pretty much sounds like what you'd expect—a band kicking out some rough music on the border of snotty punk and hardcore. The energetic *Legless Bull* EP (along with the two songs recorded for *Flex Your Head*) has a trebly guitar sound, played by John Barry, that differentiates it from the buzzsaw guitar style of the other Dischord bands from that period. Rough, ranting punk, including what the band called their "My Generation," the two-chord wonder "Sheer Terror." That song actually made multiple appearances up through their *G.I. 5* album. The best version was the wacked-out, dubby, trippy version that appeared on their first 12", *Boycott Stabb*. Even then, Stabb's vocals had a snide, sarcastic timbre. *Boycott Stabb* was a rip-roaring good time, the first to feature Tom Lyle on guitar. Buzzing, no bullshit hardcore punk with seamless execution, flowing perfectly

from one song to the next and quite a leap from the early recordings.

The four-song *Make An Effort* 7" was actually recorded before *Boycott Stabb* but released right after it. This is the only GOVERNMENT ISSUE release with Brian Baker on guitar, dishing out plenty of scorch. "Teenager In A Box" is one of their signature songs, a cautionary tale about self-destructive behavior set to a lurching arrangement, and then "Twisted Views" has a rippin' lead.

With *Joy Ride*, a few poppier inclinations started to appear with the super-catchy "Understand" and there were some crunchier riffs for the title track and "Notch To My Crotch." "Familiar" showed them adding a little more complexity to the arrangements, pushed along by Mitch Parker's percolating bass (this album was his only appearance). In the aforementioned 1985 interview, Stabb said this was their attempted rock record and he thought it was great to branch out: "We've always tried to do stuff that's completely different from the next thing. I think it's bad when people are stuck in a rut and won't do anything different because they're afraid to take chances. We've always taken chances, whether it was good or bad."

That interview was conducted soon after the release of *The Fun Just Never Ends*, which had a few harbingers of what would follow, with the psych-guitar laced "World Caved In" and the bruising pop of "Written Word" (which had a similar feel to "Understand"). They also redid "Bored To Death" from *Legless Bull* as sort of a hard rock piss-take (they'd done the same for *Boycott Stabb*'s "Hall of Fame" on *Joy Ride*) and also slowed down the FAITH's "Trapped" to a slower, pounding tempo.

G.I. 5, which was actually a self-titled album and their fourth full-length studio effort, was the band's pinnacle, in my opinion—or at least the best synthesis of their hardcore punk roots with something wider-ranging. This was the album where GOVERNMENT ISSUE started introducing different instruments into their sound, particularly organ and the closing song, "Last Forever," which was just vocals, sitar and drums. It was certainly a long way from "Asshole" and "Sheer Terror." Stabb mentioned in an interview I did with the band in 1987 that they were more interested in sounding like mid-period DAMNED than AC/DC, making reference to the hard rock direction that some of the Boston hardcore bands went in. I'd say they achieved that pretty well on *G.I. 5*, with hook-laden gems like "It Begins Now" and "Even When You're Here." They did draw in some ideas from the DAMNED's *Machine Gun Etiquette* and *Black Album* and made it part of the musical tapestry.

After that album, GOVERNMENT ISSUE signed with Giant Records, which was distributed by Dutch East India (who also owned the Homestead label) for their final two albums, *You* and *Crash*. J. Robbins (later with JAWBOX) and Pete Moffett had come in on bass and drums, respectively, and definitely added a strong rhythmic punch. Both albums (*You* in particular) have solid, energetic performances throughout, and Stabb had modified his vocals a bit, affecting more of a Dave Vanian-inspired timbre than in the past, bolstered by strong backing vocals. The DAMNED influence became somewhat more pronounced as well. *You* has some dark subject matter, dealing with the disintegration of Stabb's relationship with a much younger girlfriend. *Crash*, their final album, takes on a more pronounced rock tone and it's not always as ear-catching, although the full-on crunch still remained.

After GOVERNMENT ISSUE's demise, Stabb played in a number of bands—BETTY BLUE, EMMAPEEL, FACTORY INCIDENT, and HISTORY REPEATED—up through the last few years of his life. I've only heard some songs here and there but it seemed as though he continued to pursue what began with *You* and *Crash*—melody-driven rock. In the 1987 *Suburban Voice* interview, Stabb said, "Personally, the only category I ever accept is rock, rock'n'roll, or underground, and even if you say underground, that's sort of an iffy thing, too, because are you like Vince The Mole from *Deputy Dawg* ('60s cartoon show)?" He did acknowledge that they were an underground band because he didn't drive, opting instead for subways or trains. At that point, I said, "Say goodnight, John." Goodnight, John...rest in peace.

Just about all of GOVERNMENT ISSUE's output remains in print, albeit some of it just on CD. Dr. Strange Records released two double CD *Complete History* anthologies in 2000 that has everything they did except for the first demo, *Legless Bull*, and the songs on *Flex Your Head*, and there are various live and more obscure tracks. Dischord released the complete *Boycott Stabb* session in 2010—22 tracks in all.

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"1977 and we're gonna show em all!"

I've been thinking a lot about 1977 lately. '77 punk casts a long shadow over my world view. I spent about year writing in this column about my opinions on the foremost UK punk bands of the '77 explosion. When I first got into punk in the early '80s, the '77 explosion was only a few years in the past. In those days the "old punks" were in their mid to late twenties and reminiscing about the "good old days" of five or six years ago. I knew one or two people in the early '80s scene who were in their early thirties who had been into Bowie, Roxy Music, and such before '77, but the majority in DC at least didn't get involved until '79–'80 when the Madam's Organ scene got rolling. We used to make fun of hippies who were "living in the past" pining for Woodstock and the scene of fifteen years before.

Now in 2016, 1977 seems very distant. It's not uncommon to see a show attended mostly by people in their thirties or even forties rather than teens and twenties. We are living in a world that is primarily informed by a scene from thirty years ago, making the hippies of the '80s seem pretty modern and current by comparison. Punk has changed a *lot* in the last thirty-plus years. Some things are remarkably constant, while others would be unrecognizable to punks of 1977. Interestingly, it seems that today it's the hardcore scene of the early '80s that has had the biggest and longest lasting impact. While the punk explosion of 1977 threw open a lot of doors and broke down a lot of barriers, it took another generation to take things to the next level and really run with the ideals that it unleashed.

I've been watching a lot of videos of '77 punk bands online, looking more at the clothes and hair than listening to the music. Punk style has really changed—so many of those '77 bands were still wearing ties and suit jackets. It's really rare to see anyone in a tie at a gig these days. The only beards in those days would have been on a bouncer or bartender. About the only

constant are blue jeans and leather jackets (which the punks ironically inherited from the Teddy Boys and rockers).

I have a reputation as being opinionated about music. My strongest opinions are reserved for hardcore punk. I'm actually pretty chill when it comes to other genres of music—That is to say, I only really dislike a narrow spectrum of music. Most music I can appreciate, even if it's not my to my taste. For example, I don't really like James Taylor's music, but when it comes to singer songwriters, you gotta admit he's got style and talent. Hardcore punk is at the same time my least and most favorite kind of music. I feel so strongly about the genre that the music I have the most outright loathing for is also, in the big picture, the same as the music I like the most. Hardcore reaches me at a level that no other music does. I cannot remain indifferent to "Pick Your King" or "Can't Tell No One"—this music just connects with me in a visceral way. That said, I think the music I reserve the most dislike for is what we used to call mall punk, stuff like NOFX, Green Day, Rancid, and the like. That kind of stuff just winds me up and makes me angry and uncomfortable. I also really can't stand the music associated with the far right. I don't care how "catchy" it is, bands like Skrewdriver, Brutal Attack, and all that are just a huge turn off due to the lyrical content and fan base.

When it comes to other kinds of music, I can get into metal, hard rock, and funk/soul about the same as I can into punk, although it has less meaning for me. That is to say, I can get pretty into an AC/DC or Parliament jam, but it doesn't have the same connection to me as hardcore punk does.

I really can't stand country music in any of its guises. Really just don't like it at all. I work in construction, and there's a lot of non-ironic country music played on job sites, and it's almost as bad as stuff like the Dropkick Murphys and Blink-182 as far as getting under my skin. I make one exception for the first two John Prine LPs, but I prefer to lump him in with folk rather than country. Like a lot of record collectors, if you dig through my collection, you will find a smattering of records across genres: surf, blues, folk, jazz, reggae, R&B. Probably the only genres not represented would be country, opera, and mall punk.

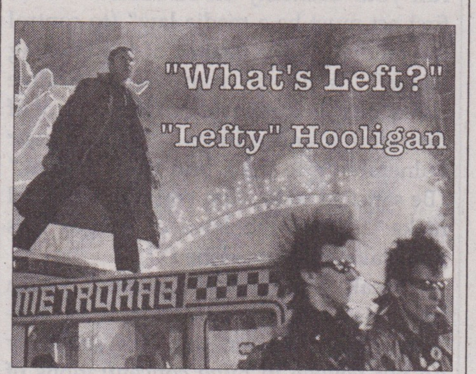
I just can't get into opera. In college I had a professor who was a failed opera singer. He used to talk about the majesty, the pageantry, the epic drama, and on and on. But listening to it, I just can't get into it. I am also totally indifferent to about all radio/top 40 pop music. And the whole college/indie rock scene goes right over my head. People gush about bands like REM and Radiohead and that stuff just goes right in one ear and out the other.

So now and then out of curiosity I will click on some internet link to "top 100 punk albums" or check out a "best punk songs of all time" playlist. And this exercise always demonstrates to me how much of punk I just really *don't* like. I always nod in approval at the obvious Ramones, Clash, and Damned inclusions. But usually by the time I am a quarter into the list I am dizzy with dismay as I've never heard of most of the bands or consider them mall fodder of the most derivative sort. It always amuses me because I've been pretty die hard for many years, but just goes to show you how many varying interpretations there are of punk to different people. It also reminds the subset who read and write for this zine how small our subgenre is when compared to what most people still consider "punk music." So I rest my case, punk is at the same time the best and the worst genre of music

ENDNOTES:

1) Bad Brains, Minor Threat, Negative Approach, Poison Idea, Die Kreuzen.

2) "Loudmouth", "Today Your Love, Tomorrow the World", "Chain Saw".



Poor Mexico, so far from God, so close to the United States.
—Porfirio Diaz, president of Mexico

America's founding myth is that we rose up against tyranny and oppression, fought a justified revolution for our freedoms, built a vibrant entrepreneurial economy, and established a democratic republic based on life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to become a light unto humanity, a beacon of hope for the world. To use the crude vernacular, "we pulled ourselves up by our own bootstraps." But that's not such a grand accomplishment in the 18th century, what with muzzle-loading flintlock musket technologies on a continent isolated by nearly four thousand miles of ocean and up to three months of travel from far more powerful nations in Europe. When the historical facts about the origins of the United States are transformed into ahistorical truisms, we have a problem.

The idea that marginal English colonists—in a hemisphere substantially depopulated of natives by disease, on the periphery of a mercantilist empire transitioning from absolutism to parliamentarianism, subject to benign neglect for decades—would succeed in forming a frontier republic based on a footnote to British liberal Enlightenment politics is not surprising. What is surprising is that such a one-off political experiment could be replicated anywhere else in the world. And, in fact, it hasn't. Even when the Allies defeated the Axis powers, reduced Germany, Japan, and Italy to rubble, and forcefully remolded those nations into Western liberal democracies, they remained substantially different from the American ideal—still very traditional with far fewer freedoms and far more governmental regulation. So if the US experience cannot be repeated within the rubric of Western liberalism, what makes anybody think it can be reproduced outside that context?

Various neocon war criminals for one, but more generally the American political punditry. All of these "talking heads" believed that a country like Iraq for instance could pull itself up by its bootstraps to emulate Western liberal democracies steeped in Enlightenment values after decades of war and civil war, scores of despotic tyranny, and centuries of colonial imperialism. A quixotic pipe dream at best, and cynical bullshit at worst. The measures taken by the US—no-fly zones, blockades, embargoes—to affect regime change against Saddam Hussein and bring about some sort of military coup or "peoples power" uprising ultimately failed, requiring the American military invasion the consequences of which we are still living with today. We're well aware how the Iraqi effort to pull itself up by its bootstraps worked out, aren't we? Can you say Islamic State? I knew you could.

Historically, similar sanctions regimes have rarely, if ever, succeeded in democratizing or Americanizing their intended targets. As one recent *New York Times* headline puts it, Venezuela would

rather experience "hunger, blackouts, and government shutdowns" than kowtow to *Yanqui* imperialism. Iran remained defiant against US/UN sanctions for over 35 years until sanctions relief in 2016. Cuba held out for over 50 years against the US economic embargo before the Obama administration began normalizing diplomatic relations with the island nation. Sanctions put in place by the Nixon administration against Allende's Chile succeeded not in democratizing that country but in fomenting a fascist coup under Pinochet. By themselves, sanctions have failed time and again to achieve their stated goals of democratic regime change, leaving intact their implied goals of disrupting, destabilizing, and destroying their targets however.

Go back to the OG sanctions regime, the French cordon sanitaire. Lieutenant Commander Stanley F. Gilchrist wrote in his essay "The Cordon Sanitaire—Is It Useful? Is It Practical?": *As early as the 17th century, the French term,* cordon sanitaire *(sanitary zone), was used to describe the establishment of a perimeter around an area infected with contagious disease to effect a quarantine. Gradually its usage spread to connote military perimeters enclosing safe areas. Later, the system of alliances instituted by France in post-World War I Europe that stretched from Finland to the Balkans was also referred to as a* cordon sanitaire. *It completely ringed Germany and sealed off Russia from Western Europe, thereby isolating the two politically "diseased" nations of Europe.* Germany saw the rise of Hitler and National Socialism, initiating the second World War in Europe despite the *cordon sanitaire*. And Russia remained Bolshevik for nearly 75 years, expanding into an international Communist bloc that ruled 1/5 of the world's land surface and 1/3 of the world's population despite various sanctions regimes to contain it.

Pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps doesn't work, but sanctions that force one to Westernize don't really work either. Something more subtle is required to turn recalcitrant nations onto the correct, American-approved path. Perhaps a little backroom US political or economic pressure, or maybe the market exigencies of the world capitalist economy, can "persuade" the country in question to become more open to American guidance and Western influence. Brazil's left-wing government is in the midst of a right-wing, legalistic coup in all but name. The right has won election outright in Argentina hoping to regain access to international capital markets, appease foreign creditors, and solve the country's debt default. Under American pressure, Japan is moving to the right as Prime Minister Abe reforms the country's defense policy to allow greater Japanese military action abroad, even the acquisition of nuclear weapons, while engaging in historical revisionism regarding Japan's role during the second World War. Even in Venezuela under American sanctions, where the Left still controls the presidency but has lost control of parliament, the US continues to encourage a deliberate, massive disruption of the economy by domestic right-wing forces.

So what's a decent sovereign country supposed to do—"so far from God, so close to the United States"? Aside from greeting their American liberators with "sweets and flowers," that is. Most of those nations wishing to remain independent of the US and the West tend to be leftist in political orientation, although theocratic Iran and fascist Myanmar run counter to this.

Ian Welsh has written a provocative essay on his blog with the self-explanatory title "Seven Rules for Running a Real Left-Wing Government," lessons that are applicable across the political spectrum. His section headers are equally clear and incendiary, and I've made notes in parentheses where appropriate. "It's not you, it's [...] the world system." "Don't run your economy on resources." "Your first act must be a media law" (to control the media). "Take control of the banking sector." "Who is your administrative class" (and is it reliable)? "Take control of distribution and utilities." "Reduce your vulnerability to the world trade system." "Be satisfied with what you can grow and make." "Obey the laws of purges" (as Machiavelli first described).

"Break your enemy's power," Welsh concludes. "If you're any sort of left-winger worth your salt, you ethically do not believe in huge concentrations of power and money in the hands of a few people anyway. Act on your beliefs. And if they've committed a pile of crimes (and they almost always have), use those crimes against them. Then remember the world system is set up expressly to stop what you are doing. You're tackling the dragon, and most people who do that get eaten. We tell the stories of the dragonslayers because they are so few. So, know the odds are against you, and be willing to do what is required to improve them. If you aren't, stay home."

The horror! The denial of free expression! The violation of human rights! The suppression of private property and profit!

When I first called myself an anarchist some forty-eight years ago, I believed that free expression was an absolute that could be scrupulously maintained while carrying out a spontaneous revolution for individual human liberation against the power of private property and profit. Nowadays, I think that the power of private property and profit needs to be severely curtailed if not communized, that the goal is social revolution based on organized social power and that there's no such things as absolute freedom of expression. Recently, a chuckle-headed free speech absolutist I sometimes ridicule in this column agreed with this in a back-handed way. He has cried censorship in the denial of free speech by government, corporate, social, even market forces, yet he himself draws the line on *his* Facebook page where he reserves the right to censor free speech. As if declaring your power to censor your personal digital squat at the sufferance of Zuckerberg's whims, Facebook's changing rules and corporate ownership, and government oversight means shit. But by drawing even such a puny reverse line in the sand, he acknowledges that there are lines to be drawn and defended. And that freedom of speech is not absolute.

Free speech doesn't really exist when you're willing to engage in civilized debate with fascists only to be stomped in an alley afterwards by the boneheads. And freedom of speech can't really exist for right-wing opposition in leftist societies when the US Sixth Fleet is anchored offshore. I find no shame in defending yourself, your community, even your country from fascists, be they actual Nazi skinheads or *Yanqui* imperialists. You know my opinions on fighting fascists. Don't assume I'm going all Third World national liberation struggle on you now. I have no love for the nation-state, even in its revolutionary/leftist guise. But I no longer blithely repeat ultraleft platitudes about "no war but the class war" and the need for "world revolution" to dismiss the problematics of nationalism and uneven development. I take cautious inspiration from indications that the Left's long deadlock and current crisis might be transcended. Independent political currents are emerging that are fostering a dialogue between anarchism and Marxism. Hybrid social experiments are coming to the fore in Chiapas and Rojava, with bright promise and deep imperfections. And efforts to constitute

genuine social power are being attempted by partial, flawed insurrectionary and communizing tendencies.

I'm pessimistically optimistic about the future of the Left.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA:
My personal blog : gamatiasz.wordpress.com
My political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
My Facebook page: facebook.com/GAMatiasz

I've been doing transcriptions of some mid-to-late '90s record reviews over the past month or so as part of the *MRR* archives project (have you donated to it yet?), and I have to say, realizing how many times I wound up typing out the phrases "Lookout Records," "Fat Wreck Chords," and/or "NOFX" when they have been used as descriptors in those back issues really started to make me a little self-conscious about what I end up writing in this column every month. *MRR* is truly forever, and one of these days (probably soon, if it hasn't happened already) someone will be laughing at the unintentional drinking game that can be initiated with every mention of, say, WIRE or the RAINCOATS or the FALL that I make. You could start right now, even!

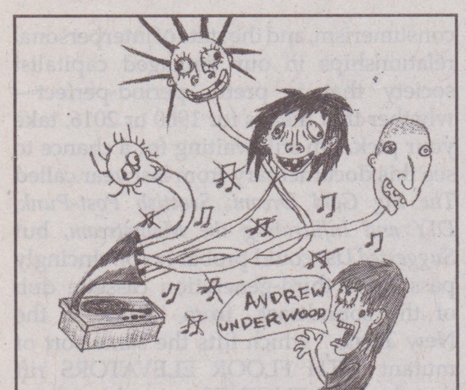
TARZAN 5 were an early '80s mixed-gender English quintet with dual female vocalists and an affinity for choppy, sociopolitically-informed dance floor post-punk rhythms—if their choice of band name didn't already invoke mental parallels to DELTA 5, the music definitely will. The group's entire recorded legacy is limited to a two-song 7" single from 1981 put out by 021 Records, the label run (fittingly enough) by the AU PAIRS, whose own approach to subtly dub-influenced femme-punk would form the other primary compass point for the TARZAN 5 sound. A-side "Boys Game" has one of those rubbery and classically post-punk bass lines that holds the entire song together, and while I know that these are always the two examples of the aforementioned that I seem to turn to, this one could absolutely warrant a footnote citing both "White Mice" by the MO-DETTES and "Mind Your Own Business" by DELTA 5 as primary source material. Everything really snaps into place with the overlapping vocals in the second verse, as one voice sings sweetly while the other delivers the same exact lines slightly off-time in a calmly detached monotone—It only lasts for a few quick moments, but it's brilliantly effective. On the B-side, "Different Story" is a slow-burner with a totally dubbed-out, SLITS-y bass/drums foundation and juxtaposed horns that's perfect for your next punky reggae party. A crucial forgotten femme-punk one-single wonder just waiting to be rediscovered.

PRIMO are a ragged pop trio featuring Violetta of Melbourne, Australia's foremost FALL freaks the SHIFTERS and Xanthe of jangly upstart Aussie supergroup TERRY, and the seven tracks on their new *Primo Cassetto* (digital-only for now, proper tape release forthcoming on Hidiotic) essentially split the difference between those two branches of the family tree. "Daphne" nods to the SHIFTERS' lackadaisical lo-fi sprawl, with the hauntingly staggered twin vocals and threadbare minimalism of "Big Noise" recalling the less-is-more YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS / MARINE GIRLS school of post-punk in spirit, if not precisely in sound. The other side of the PRIMO coin is a shambling primitive-pop bent (see "Gold Frame" or "Mirage") that's become synonymous with the Melbourne subsection of the contemporary Australian underground, or if you want to go back even just a few years, the ecstatically scrappy garage-leaning harmonies of SUPER WILD HORSES. ("Compare," in particular, makes a really strong case for a psychic connection to the latter.) These songs often sound as if they're likely to unravel at any moment, precariously held together by only a handful of nakedly fuzzed-out guitar chords, no-frills drumming, and reverberations of bass cutting through the murk, but that's honestly what makes them so endearing. (primocassetto.bandcamp.com)

Portland's premier post-punk solo recording project (recently turned full-fledged live outfit) CONDITIONER have crash-landed into the most jagged and fractured sounds of late '70s / early '80s UK DIY via their debut EP *Suggested Use,* and I'm just glad to have another band in town (beyond my own) geeking out over the Fast Products back catalog. There's enough trebly guitar clang, rhythmically jabbing bass lines, and stuttering drums here to fill out an entire *Messthetics* compilation or two, complete with anxiously yelped lyrical sloganeering about technology, consumerism, and the state of interpersonal relationships in our damaged capitalist society that is pretty period-perfect—whether that means for 1980 or 2016, take your pick. I'm still waiting for a chance to see this documentary from last year called *The Big Gold Dream: Scottish Post-Punk, DIY and Infiltrating the Mainstream,* but *Suggested Use* could probably convincingly pass for a third-generation cassette dub of the soundtrack, from "Stuck in the New Teens," which lifts the same sort of mutant 13TH FLOOR ELEVATORS riff that the FIRE ENGINES twisted into new shapes to form the basis of their most off-kilter songs, to the total "JOSEF K backed by a thrift store drum machine" vibe of "Romance, Commodity." Lock up your SCARS records! (bestsupportingactress.bandcamp.com)

The ultra-brief *NLP* EP, presumably the first recordings from Manchester economical-punk combo DUDS, originally popped up in the internet realm back in January, but I didn't stumble on them until just a few weeks ago. It's kind of strange to think that these three songs might have actually reached a wider audience if they had been released by some DEVO-worshipping Midwestern freaks as a small-run tape with hand-scrawled, photocopied artwork, instead of being put up on, y'know, a widely-accessible digital music platform like Bandcamp, but such are the mysteries of our weird modern punk age. The interlocked, repetitive precision of the bass and drums and the sparse, needling guitar lines in "Pocket Calculator" (a KRAFTWERK cover, not an ELTON MOTELLO cover) exist somewhere in the grey area between *Pink Flag* and *Chairs Missing*-era WIRE, stripping the original song's master text down to an almost unrecognizable and nervously wired two minutes. If any of y'all miss the late, great RANK/XEROX as much as I do, you might find some comfort in the razor-sharp post-punk slash of "Take It," which has the same sense of paranoid urgency and barely-restrained tension that those San Franciscans had nailed a whole five years ago (kind of seems like a lifetime now). A second DUDS EP followed pretty closely on the heels of *NLP*, and if it's as good as this one, I'll be really curious to see if they can keep it up for awhile. (dudsdudsduds.bandcamp.com)

Say hey! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA, digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds: futuresandpasts.org



Great fucking news everybody! Seriously, you're going to have to sit down for this one. Ready???

EXITHIPPIES are back in the techno game! After spending the the last couple of years wallowing in (admittedly great) relatively straightforward stench-y/noise-y hardcore, EXITHIPPIES have finally returned to their other preferred style, delivering up four cuts of dark house-meets-crust vocals insanity on their new split cassette with FILTHY HATE, plus a heaping helping of mellow (if clank-y) dub towards the end as well..."Dub 3" just gets straight up weird before it's all finished. Like, perhaps this shit (okay, definitely this shit) shouldn't really get reviewed in *MRR* since it's hard to define as "punk" in any meaningful way, but on the other hand it's way more fucking punk than anything that comes in the door with a one-sheet or could reasonably be compared to dad-rock. (A: fuck SPRINGSTEEN. B: if your band sounds like or is inspired by SPRINGSTEEN, see A. Also, not fuckin' punk. Corollary notion: fuck TOM PETTY, too.) Shit, keep your "mutant punk." I'm over here digging on mutant techno made by punx for punx. Fortunately for the fragile listener, after EXITHIPPES have blown your mind, FILTHY HATE are ready to glue it back together with killer riffs and blast beats galore. The other side of the tape is material from their *Mentality Parasite* demo. It's crazy to think that this band has already been around for fucking five years plus—I feel like I just picked up their first demo the other day. Over that time they may have grown a little bit more metallic and a touch more technical but they've never lost the most important element of their identity: this is a band that is clearly having fun and is thus always a blast to listen to. This is rotten flannel/stinky bandanna thrash, drawing equally from early NAPALM DEATH and DEVIATED INSTINCT, with more than a nod or two to skate-minded countrymen like ROSE ROSE and DEADLESS MUSS as well. (Doomed to Extinction)

It's comforting to know, in this topsy-turvy world of ours, that you always know where you stand with ASUKA AND THE BUM SERVANTS. Everybody's favorite drunk punk all-stars have returned with their second EP of the year, *Punk President*. From the classic *Punk & Disorderly* piss-take cover to the cover of early UK punkers the WALL, this is shambolic pogo-worship at its finest. Asuka's vocals are more prominent in the mix than they were on the earlier EP, and that's for the better. Ricky's low-tuned and barely in-time bass playing gives the material a nice chaotic and slightly hardcore edge, especially in the up-tempo "But I Love Beer" and "Battle Fever" (also available as a swank limited cassingle!). Unsurprisingly, ASUKA AND THE BUM SERVANTS continue to enjoy beer and sex (and now video games as well), whilst disdaining work and politics as usual. This is a killer EP, definitely a step up from the self-titled record, which was pretty great already. (Pogo 77)

HAZARD have been kicking around the Japanese scene for over twenty years now. They've never made a ton of waves or attracted a lot of attention, but they've always been a reliably good band. Their new EP, *Free From It!* continues the trend of unspectacular but solid releases. Guitarist Tomio provides most of the highlights in the form of super-flashy solos that could have been dropped in off an '80s thrash metal record. Tempos are mostly low-key throughout, though the propulsive riff of "Emperor's Army (Part 2)" gives the track some real oomph and inspires the most raw and impassioned overall performance on the record. It's not a record that's likely to blow you away, but the more hardcore fans of Japanese hardcore out there would be well-served to pick this up. Plus, it comes with a patch to stick on your crust pants! (Pogo 77)

Lots of killer reissues this month, but there's one in particular that's kind of the elephant in the room. Let's address it, shall we? Sapporo's own legends NAPALM have finally gotten a comprehensive vinyl release, and it's a hell of a listen. The *1984–1986* LP collects the *A Detestable Deed* demo (minus a spoken-word part), their tracks from the *Sapporo Punk Omnibus* tape, and five live cuts from a 1984 gig. Sound quality is great, striking a balance between clarity and the raw tape feel that this material should have. The material is, of course, fantastic. Fast and heavy (for the time) hardcore that embraces DISCHARGE and the Kyushu style in equal measure. Ishibashi's strangled vocals are the most distinctive element of the NAPALM style, but the CONFUSE-style constant fills and rolls provided by the drummer are a definite highlight as well. The rock-solid bass playing tempers the chaos somewhat, especially when the guitarist commits to his occasional flailing, Ginn-esque solos. The live tracks are predictably lo-fi, but are compelling regardless, mostly due to the crazed tempo and super-aggressive vocal performance. The packaging is solid, featuring a heavy-duty tip-on sleeve, obi, and some great pictures of the band looking both scary and punk as fuck. I do wish there was more information about the band than the single paragraph provided, but one can't always get everything they want in life, right? This one sold pretty darn quickly, so keep a sharp eye out for a copy and grab one if you can! (F.O.A.D.)

An unexpected treat this month was the bootleg "reissue" of *Fatal Response: Rescue Ladders & Human Barricade*, the second volume in a series of compilations originally issued on cassette by the legendary early Filipino punk label Twisted Red Cross. Featuring mostly melodic punk, this comp doesn't necessarily fall into the range of stuff I usually cover, but goddamn it's great, both as a document of an important and largely unknown scene and as a killer record. Highlights include the always amazing GEORGE IMBECILE & THE IDIOTS (whose *Fascinating World of Garbage* album just got officially reissued by Mutilated Noise Records and is very much worth picking up as well), ZOOT SUIT's old-school sax-driven rockabilly, and the amazing DEAD ENDS who provide both a catchy CLASH rocker and a killer hardcore/punk stomper ("Don't Drop Your Guns", worth the price of admission by itself). The sound is great for a bootleg (which must have been taken from an original tape), the artwork is faithfully reproduced, and the color vinyl is pretty. I really hope that the person(s) behind this keep up the good work. I'd love a vinyl copy of the *3rd Bombardment* compilation, the DEAD ENDS albums, and the R.D.A. album someday! (Croce Rossa Non Distorto)

It's impossible to say that I was saving the best for last when most everything preceding was so goddamn good, but this fucking SP CAOS *Demo 1984* EP is a complete punch in the fucking face and as equally as crucial a reissue as anything released this year. This is a complete shit-fi classic, joining schizophrenic tempo

changes to out of tune guitars, completely unhinged vocals, and sub one-minute songs. The material that's being passed around suggests that this is influenced by Finnish hardcore, but that description is misleading: this is sui generis, a product entirely of Brazil, January 1984, that may have incorporated such influences but certainly doesn't reflect them back in any meaningful way. While much less technically accomplished, I can only compare hearing this material to the first time I heard the NEGAZIONE side of the *Mucchio Selvaggio* split and was in awe at the notion that hardcore could be so frantic and out of control and still be so fucking perfect. Apparently the vocalist went on to play bass in INOCENTES, but this isn't at all about "members of...", this is about "if you love hardcore fucking punk in its rawest and most primitive form you need to pick up this fucking record." If nothing else, they hold the world record for the best five second song in existence (A5, "Sistema"). Incredible. (Spicoli/Nada Nada Discos)

Send me '90s DISCLOSE flyers c/o MRR. *Email complaints and cash bribes to agunderwood@gmail.com.*

I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion column though. (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the 'punks' and the 'punx'.")

Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357)! Or send a regular assed email to: ASKMRR@MAIL.COM. If you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!

Mr.R, Why is the ban on Gilman only happening now, when they refused to post "No Transphobia" on their rules a long time ago? This question requires fact-checking.

Well, the originators of the Boycott Gilman social media pages have chosen to remain anonymous, so fact-checking with them about their reasoning for bringing a boycott now and not at the time of each issue they list isn't really an option. I would imagine they waited until now because calling out a club as long standing and internationally respected as 924 Gilman isn't a casual decision/task, which you'll see if you've had a chance to look at the long stream of hateful comments left for the authors. People have been fighting/threatening pretty hard to maintain the status quo at that place, as though citing the past is an excuse to avoid having to grow in the future.

As the boycott describes it, the "long and ugly battle" to add "No Transphobia" to Gilman's list of rules was fought within the walls of the club like all the other incidents detailed. Gilman has a long history of being a collective with many different personalities who have to deal with each other on many different issues on which they don't always see eye to eye. The traditional route for these club issues has been to attend meetings, talk about items, put them to a vote, and deal with the outcome. As the makeup of the club has changed over the years, it makes sense that it would be only after *numerous* disheartening instances that they would decide to take a different and more public route.

It generally takes a long time to feel totally out of options. Since the statement's release, there has been a lot of criticism of having the discussion on social media sites and not just within the confines of the club, but it does seem that an electronic forum was the perfect place to discuss it since way more people have been made aware of the issues, thus being able to debate the importance of radical politics and inclusivity in punk on a much larger scale.

It's hard to believe that adding "No Transphobia" to the rules would have to be any kind of battle in a community such as ours, but it is also so hard to believe that there would even be a gender-neutral bathroom argument of any kind. Think about that, the decision to make sure any body/any identity could use any bathroom of their choosing got out of the meetings at Target faster than through the ones at Gilman? When you read the list of details and incidents, you can truly feel the frustration of the people who have been banging their heads against a wall for a long time trying to force that place to keep up with the radical identity of punk. This boycott feels very much like a last resort from people who have found out time and time again that these days Gilman isn't even as radical as a Target store.

Despite all the fighting, this seems like it could be a good turning point for the club. As people like to continually point out in defense of Gilman, there is a severe lack of all ages show spaces in the Bay Area now. People on all sides are thinking about that place in a way they haven't in a long time, and this is an opportunity for them to either address their issues and become a larger part of the changing and radical punk scene or choose to do nothing and continue on as a place stuck in a glory day time loop.

Have your question answered in MRR! *OOOO AAHHHH! Send a text to 510-585-HELP. Send an email to: askmrr@gmail.com.*

Mistress Nightrider on being a Punk Pro-Domme

I'm being very California on a Saturday morning taking my time choosing between different types of kale at the farmer's market when I get a text from the woman who runs my dungeon.

"The house boy needs a quick inspection of his work."

I'm not scheduled to work, but she's fair—I'll get free time at the dungeon and stay in her good graces. I ask if there are any specifics in dealing with the houseboy.

"No, just inspect his work and domme with him. He is a submissive. Spank him, have him kiss your feet, make him recite poetry, whatever."

I am an independent pro-domme, working for no one, renting space as needed, but I do a fair share to contribute to this dungeon. It's beautifully furnished with everything from a St. Andrew's cross to an antique dental chair and is fully equipped with your usual floggers, anal hooks, and the like. The dungeon is more of a respectable kink-community space versus an impersonal pay-by-the-hour

torture chamber.

When I arrive, the houseboy is wearing a full harness, cock ring around his cock and balls, and yellow kitchen gloves. He is completely naked, scrubbing the floor next to one of the cages. This is my life. I inspected the multiple rooms and pointed out what he had missed, but made sure to commend him when appropriate, as I am not beyond showing benevolence when deserved.

My dungeon is very clean and I am very grateful for him. I strapped him facedown in a bondage-chair, spanked him barehanded, and performed some corporal punishment. I kept our session very light and ended by making him get on his knees, verbally worship me, and clean my feet with his mouth. He earned it, being such a good boy and serving all of us so well.

A dominatrix is, by definition, "a dominating woman, especially one who takes the sadistic role in sadomasochistic sexual activities." As a pro-domme (my preferred term), I am a sex worker. Sex work is a very murky world and everyone has their own take on the linguistics, labels, and definitions. Emotions can run high when treading these waters so please note this column is based on my perspective and I do not speak for the community at large.

The world of sex work is fraught with ambiguity. In a very basic sense there are four categories of sex worker (excluding hotline, film, and internet based activities): dominatrix, stripper, massage, and escort. Many of these categories blur together and many workers fall into multiple categories of the industry. The boundaries of different types of sex work are vaguely defined. Basically, one must create their own hard limits and trust their instincts to stay safe and comfortable.

Some people in the industry desire a hierarchy among sex workers or shun the label of "sex worker." Fellow workers who feel they are superior because they do a certain type of sex work rub me the wrong way. Whether the penetrator or the penetrated (I wear a strap-on often!), there should be no snobbery among us. Whatever a willing worker and their client feel comfortable doing with their bodies, as long as it is safe for all parties involved, should be respected by others. It's basically all the same game; mostly straight men pay women to indulge them in fantasy of some sort. This may involve mutual touching or maybe the man relieving himself with no physical contact between parties. In the end, some sort of sexual transaction occurs for money.

I make a very decent living as a domme. It supports my creative endeavors and gives me time to work on a myriad of projects. Absolutely no one who knows me has been surprised that I am now a domme, especially my exes. One recently asked what took me so long. I have all sorts of interesting interactions with people when they find out I am a pro-domme, but really, men have treated me this way my whole life. When I still smoked, I'd ask for a cigarette and get a pack. Interactions like that are regular occurrences for me- and very often, I do not need to ask. I don't believe it has to do with how attractive a woman is when they elicit a certain response from men. Looks can only take you so far.

I was born a super sensualist. As a little girl, I delighted in dipping my hands in bags or flour or reaching out and touching women's fur coats on crowded subway trains. I have always been hyper aware of physical sensations and compulsive about seeking those that provided me with pleasure. This has made me an intense lover and very aware of how I make others feel physically. I love binding clothes and if it were practical to live in latex, I would. Since I was young, I've had a penchant for vintage undergarments like corsets and garters. I've always been fascinated by sexual perversion and fetish. Strong sensuality, entitlement, and an innate coldness and cruelty prepared me ideally for the role of pro-domme.

As someone who loves adrenaline and pushing my own physical and psychological boundaries, I have always been drawn to pain, from the cool edge of a razor blade sliced over my flesh to needle play. Understanding the feelings of physical pain, sensation, and deprivation has in turn prepared me to inflict a plethora of sensations on others with a deep understanding of their impact. The mental aspects of anticipation and power play are intrinsic to proper deliverance of pain and pleasure. I have found many ways to send someone into subspace. Regarding mental dominance, finding a man's weak spot or Achilles' heel comes naturally to me, but I'd rather not discuss the psychological aspects of domming.

I get asked a lot of questions, especially from women, when they find out I am a pro-domme. I always tell them that sex work is not for everyone as there is a very high burnout rate and the risk is enormous for a whole slew of reasons. Many women have told me that they have thought about being a domme or other type of sex worker but are too scared. They should be scared—it's a sick, sad world out there, there is a lot of territory that ventures close to illegality, and there are many scenarios where we are physically (and mentally) at risk while working. That said, the punk scene is filled with sex workers who exist in this underground economy. For me, the risks are worth it as I love my vocation, the hours it offers, and the lifestyle it has afforded me thus far.

Anyway, I swore to never work a regular gig again after I lost my last square job. Thankfully I was single when I become unemployed and not accountable to anyone else regarding what I chose to do with my body. My last boyfriend had relapsed on heroin after three years clean so I was rebounding casually with some HA obsessed biker dude with a Broken Bones tattoo. Men I've dated over the years, as open-minded as they could be, probably could not handle me urinating in men's mouths and would not approve of the racy nature of an intense session. Men have tried to own me for a long time. It has never worked. As Darby said, "I was never quite tamed." You can cage an animal but the beast lives within. I could never have done this work at the capacity at which I do now until I had true ownership of myself mentally and physically.

I originally worked at a collective of sorts but after four months, I went independent. Most dommes are control freaks and I needed to find a space I felt was up to my standards, set my own hours and rates, do my own advertising, and handle bookings. This means that I have to screen clients myself and handle all their communication. I took a lot of clients with me when I went independent and have continuously done very well. I'm currently considering hiring a booking assistant. Regarding screening clients, there is an element of risk, for sure, as I exist in a quasi-legal underground filled with strange perverts. But cops don't usually go after non-trafficked high-end dommes in the Bay Area and I have a loving community to help keep me safe and give me guidance from screening resources to client warnings. It is the most pro-women community I have ever been a part of.

The punk community rallies against many aspects of our society in pursuit of nonconformist and anarchist ideals, but many parts of the culture have been assimilated and accepted. Sex workers

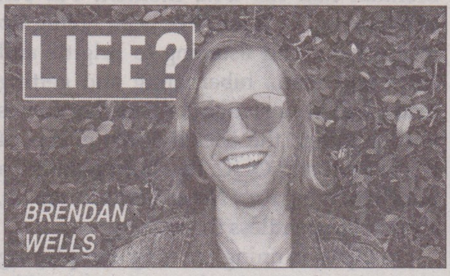
dwell on the edge and remain mostly vilified, shunned, even threatened on a daily basis. I think the politics involved translate more into our very existence versus a slogan on a band shirt. Shit is real for us every day. I take this lifestyle very seriously and have absorbed it into my identity in the same way I did with punk after my first gig at ABC No Rio. I am pretty open about my line of work within the punk community and I think it's important that sex workers in punk feel safe.

BDSM is currently very trendy and punks have been decked in bondage gear since the '70s, so I am not too concerned about judgment from punkers. I own what I do and even my mother knows. She recently asked me, "What will you say at the parent/teacher conference when they ask what you do for work?" Considering that I struggle to find a partner with decent oral hygiene and steady income without untreated mental health issues, I'm not too concerned about what my non-existent offspring's teacher is going to think about my line of work. Right now, I'm basically focusing on my business and not on some draining co-dependent relationship.

I've covered a lot but not enough in this column. As I mentioned earlier, this is based on my perspective as a heteroflexible, white female living in one of the most, if not *the* most, sex-positive, pro-kink and pro-queer areas in the world. Please do not misconstrue my use of gender pronouns or judge me for only speaking about male clients and not including my female or transgender clients. I have a diverse clientele. I also hold my male allies in this community near and dear to my heart. I have heard that the sex worker community is not as open in other areas and more cutthroat—and that makes me sad. If anyone seeks guidance in any way, please feel free to reach out to me via *MRR*.

This is a very personal profession and it is up to the individual to define the parameters of their work. My objective in writing this column was to provide some basic information so that a sliver of light could be shone on a world that is secretive in nature. So, keep wearing your bondage gear, punk, and maybe some day it'll cease being just an accessory.

If you are a sex worker and are interested in contributing to an on-going series on the topic, contact mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Discretion guaranteed.



The tour diary column is the perfect crime. If you write a column for *MRR* and you go on tour, all you have to do is talk about what bands you saw and throw in a funny rest stop anecdote. Maybe if you're lucky you even get to talk about a band that killed it, who absolutely lit the room on fire, but they haven't recorded yet. "This band is going to blow up!" And who can argue with you on that? It makes you an authority, a tastemaker, and all you have to do is go on tour, which is not the most difficult thing in the world. Bands don't even have to be good to go on tour. When it comes time to write the column, there's no agonizing over whether you're using your allotted column space in the right way because getting to write the tour diary is one of the beautiful loopholes of working on this magazine. It's kind of like how Turbo is allowed to make fun of us even though we still have to edit his column because he doesn't know you're supposed to capitalize the O in "Oi!"

Uranium Club went on tour at the beginning of June and as the tour started I could tell I just wasn't going to feel passionate about writing about it, though. The shows were good!...but I've played a lot of shows at this point. Does everyone want to read about every show? I don't think I do. At some point it lost some of the magic for me. Is it something that happened after seeing so many okay-not-great bands? When did I stop making it a point to get a flyer from every show like I used to? Ralph and Sadie can do a great tour column, but maybe I'm jaded. Could I be even more jaded than Ralph????

It's hard to be honest about feeling this way, this level of disenchantment, without also feeling like an asshole. What about anyone out there who has never had the luck to play in a band, to be able to go on tour, to have people bust their asses off to throw you a show and give you money so that you can drive around and hang out with your friends and see new parts of the country? And just as memorable, the times that somebody didn't bust their ass and there is no show and you do something like play a bluegrass open mic night in Lawrence, Kansas.

I was having a good time and appreciating what was going on when I was on this tour, but it just didn't feel like something worth relaying to the world. We rented a minivan in Los Angeles and Ian wanted to smoke weed in the car before we even left the parking lot at the rental place. It was great. It was all going great, but felt somewhat inconsequential, not really something people need to hear about. We played with Mozart in San Francisco. Marissa ate the setlist in the middle of a song and it made me feel like I was watching Jimi Hendrix light a guitar on fire, but I'm having trouble conjuring up my excitement with words. I would just file it under "You had to be there" and move on.

We were stressed out in San Francisco. We were late to the gig. We didn't have time to write a proper set list before we played. We only had a few days of practice after taking four months off since the band is split between two different states now. I was already feeling worn out after just two shows. The stress of being on a tour is what reminds me that it's not a vacation.

I slept in my own bed that night in San Francisco (another strange thing to do on a tour) and then we drove to Santa Rosa. We got to the show and all of a sudden, after the weird malaise I'd been in, things felt palpable. Santa Rosa is a small place without the oversexed punk history of LA and San Francisco that can hang in the air at shows sometimes for me. The show was in a two-car garage and there was an art show inside the house. There were young cool punk ladies with skateboards and young cool punk dudes in the driveway. Shows in places like this feel like a celebration, something special.

Acrylics played and all of a sudden everything made sense to me. The room exploded immediately. If you live in a place like this, you have to love the local band. You don't have many other options. You learn the lyrics, you start moshing before a single note is even played. There was wall-to-wall slamming in a room where you could probably take three big steps and be across the room, but you'd be more likely to get in one stomp before you'd already crawled onto somebody else. There was no room for the band, so they took turns standing on top of the bass drum.

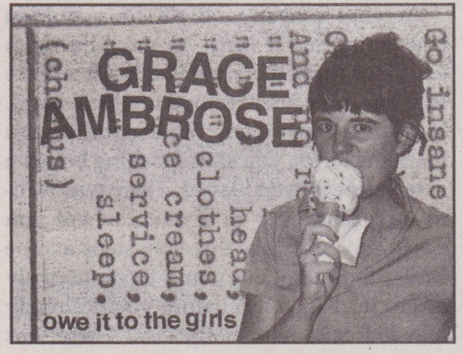
Things felt dangerous, but everybody in the back of the room laughed every time another human wave crushed them against the back wall. The singer Mark threw a sealed gallon jug of water into the

air and at the apex of its climb I flinched because I could see the future moment where it breaks somebody's nose. Instead the gallon never came down. Somehow it got wedged between the ceiling and a rafter. I felt the magic. I looked down at myself and I was covered in spit—I didn't know whose. Another miracle.

A special point of it all is that Acrylics isn't just the band that fills the role of a collection of warm bodies holding guitars so that the kids have something to mosh to. They were incredible. I asked Mark if people go crazy like that at all their shows. "Yeah, it can make things difficult sometimes." The set was hardcore in the tradition of wanting to create something unique out of that basic framework of intense frustration filtered through anxiety. One of my favorite feelings is one I get from a band like Acrylics, that purity in the musiclessness of the chaos. Who knows if this is even the kind of thing you can express on a demo tape. Who knows if I would have felt the exact same way if I wasn't covered in someone elses' spit. "You had to be there," but also "I want to do this way more often."

I think that's exactly what I needed at that moment. I feel like I've spent most of the last six months here at the magazine as an armchair punk, consuming hundreds of records and editing interviews, but being at arm's length from an actual experience. *Maximum Rocknroll* serves as a great annotation to the punk experience—I'd call it supplementary reading. It's wonderful, but there's also a world of punk out there to experience. The night in Santa Rosa is a great reminder of why I want to keep touring, even if I don't write a diary of it ever again.

brendan@maximumrocknroll.com



"This is the story of a Johnny Spud
It's better to burn out than it is to rust"

Seems like it's burnout and malaise month behind the coordinator desk at *MRR*. Brendan had his a-ha moment but I'm still looking for mine. I've been holing up in my room and listening to Brigitte and Alice and Piero, hibernating and getting ready for the onslaught of gigs that comes with summer, the trickle-down effects of B*s*rkt*wn and OHC. I've been painting a bunch, playing *Rust Never Sleeps* on repeat, and making endless flyers.

On top of running the mag and playing in two bands, I'm booking something like twelve shows this summer, all for groups I'm genuinely excited about, mostly from far-flung locales. (Kaleidoscope! 86 Gemini! JJ Doll! Muerte! CCTV! Masses! Find out if these freaks are coming to your town!) I'm stumped when it comes to finding bands to play with them though. I always ask the touring bands if there's anyone they particularly want to play with or see and more often than not the question is, "I have no idea what's going on in the Bay. What bands are you psyched on?" "None?" How depressing.

The Bay's a weird place. I'm twenty-six but I feel like the youngest person in the room, practice space culture means inept and unstudied groups (the best kind) rarely emerge, every show space feels sterile and stifling. There doesn't seem to be a sense of camaraderie here, no one seems to be a maniac fan of their friends' groups, myself included. It feels difficult to get people excited for touring bands. Is it because I'm over-saturated, surrounded by punk twenty-four hours a day? My tolerance for the GGBBs of the world has plummeted. Is it because all the bands here really do suck? They don't, of course, but they also don't inspire fever and fervor in yours truly. Where is the influx of new blood?

I want to be a fan, consume and be consumed, but I just can't make it happen. Yeah, yeah, yeah, I know it's rose-colored instagram filters that make me think that Heaven's Gate and Spice World and Rancho Relaxo and DIY Space for London are more thrilling than Thrillhouse and Knockout and 1-2-3-4 Go! and the Hive, but places like Springfield, IL, seem generative and supportive at a magnitude that far surpasses what we have in the Bay. I look at pictures and read reports from something like Dumbfest and can't even envision anything similar happening in our environs. No hype, no bullshit, just a bunch of punks having unself-conscious fun. Here, more often than not it feels like merely going through the motions. Bay Area DIY punk doesn't feel like a part of the international conversation that I'm so desperately craving. How do we make that happen? Part of it must be how geographically isolated we are—five hours to LA, twelve to the Northwest, so we don't have regional bands that frequently come through and it's more of an endeavor for us to get out of town to other places. Big city living isn't all it's cracked up to be. Help me figure out how to make what is happening in the here and now feel as exciting to me as what I'm imagining happening other places.

When punk becomes your job, and your social life collapses into your work, it can be hard to find inspiration. I'll blame some of this on that. Send me your reason for sticking with this, the thing that pushes you to do what you do better.

grace@maximumrocknroll.com

ENDNOTES:

1) We're looking for a new distribution coordinator. You wanna get intimate with the inner workings of the USPS? Ready to uproot your life and move to our palatial compound in foggy San Francisco? Write distro@maximumrocknroll.com.

2) I finally saw Flail play at the Kaleidoscope show tonight so I take it back that there are no San Francisco punk bands that I like. Recordings soon, including a track on the subscriber-only comp tape that comes with the next issue of the mag.

3) Kaleidoscope is America's only band.

4) I put out the second EP for New York's In School. *Cement Fucker* is sold out from me, but you can get it from good distros everywhere. If you live in a different country, write to me at thrillingliving@gmail.com and I'll tell you the cheapest way to get your copy. A huge step up from their already great previous effort.

4) I'm going to Mexico City in August. Catch me in the Patsy pit. If you've been, tell me what I shouldn't miss.

5) I bought an amazing pot from former columnist Osa Atoe. It's filled with an aloe plant right now, propagated from our sprawling kitchen mama plant. Get your own at potterybyosa.com.

6) The first song on the Special Interest demo feels like the end of the world. I demand a west coast tour.

7) RIP Barker Gee. We'll give you a proper tribute in the next issue. Much love to all of my friends who are hurting. It has been comforting and heartbreaking to read so many reflections on this one-of-a-kind guy. Take care of yourselves and let's start celebrating each other while we're still here to hear it.

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Scene Report
NORTH TEXAS

Words by Andi Harman, Tyler Shults, and Will Mecca. Photos provided by Andi Harman and Will Mecca.

The metroplex of north Texas contains Dallas and Fort Worth—DFW for short—and their kid brother to the north, Denton (a college town whose "charming" downtown square is flanked by the University of North Texas and Texas Woman's University). DFW is less commonly referred to as the Golden Triangle, referencing the layout of the three cities. Whatever you want to call it, it's home to a few punk legends and a constantly in-flux class of newcomers. In the early days of the genre, the TELEFONES, the NERVEBREAKERS, the HUGH BEAUMONT EXPERIENCE, BOBBY SOXX and his STICKMEN WITH RAYGUNS, and others left their mark on the map. In more recent years, bands such as the MARKED MEN, WICCANS, and TEENAGE COOL KIDS have drawn the spotlight back.

Each city in the "golden triangle" has a different mix of spaces available to host shows. It's not uncommon for Latino culture to collide with punk. In the recent past, a lot of shows happened at active taquerias, or in the case of Tapatio Studios, former *carnicerias* (butcher shops). One of the current primary DIY spaces is a Tejano bar in Fort Worth called **1912 Club**, located directly across the street from our scene's flagship punk spot, **1919 Hemphill**. 1919 is entering its fourteenth year serving our music community; it's Texas's longest-running DIY venue. A lot of us grew up coming to shows here before we were allowed into bars. During its history, it has provided the community with a library, classes and workshops, a free store, and various other important DIY events and services.

Houses have always been vital to the scene, and Denton is usually the capital of this. In the past, homes such as **Extreme Dudes Manor, The Lion's Den, Bruiser's Dojo, Dave's, 606 Congress,** and **Macaroni Island** have given bands a place to play. Currently, spots like **Gatsby's Mansion, House of Rot,** and **Peak Street** intermittently open up to host shows. But because Denton is a rapidly growing college town, nothing is ever in place for very long.

There are a few proper venues providing the stability that DIY spaces lack. In Dallas, the Deep Ellum neighborhood is flourishing with active clubs of various sizes. **Three Links** and **RBC** both pull together excellent events. Over in the Oak Cliff neighborhood, the historic **Texas Theatre** (where Lee Harvey Oswald was arrested, for history

Laughter

Noids

Marked Men

Collick

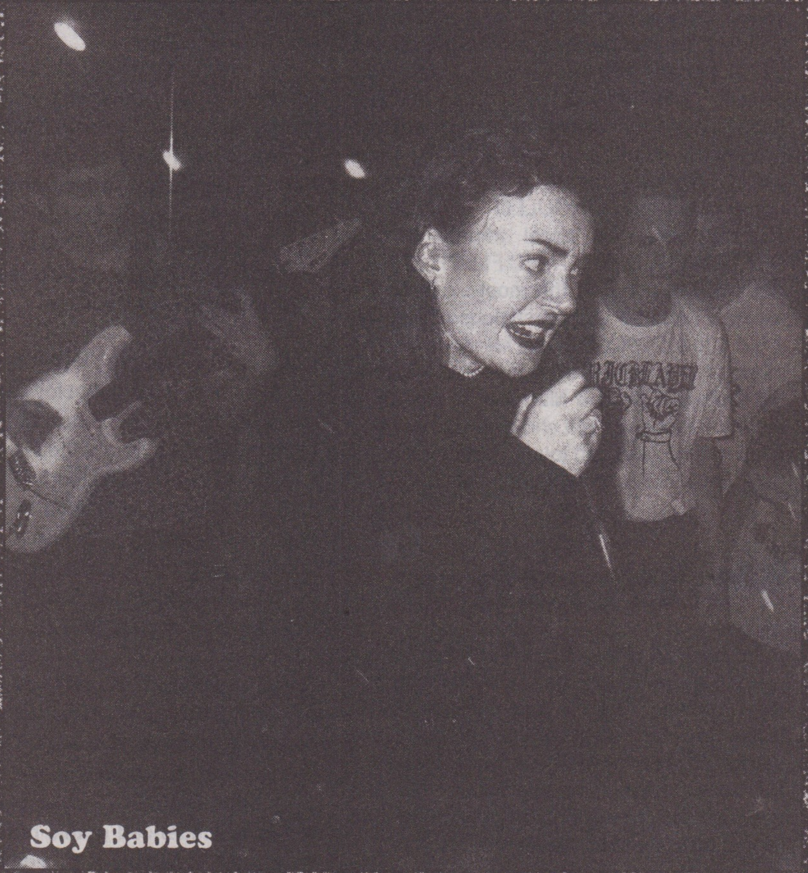
Thin Skin

buffs) pairs movie screenings with shows performed behind the screen. Earlier this summer, MIND SPIDERS followed a screening of *Green Room*.

Sadly, up in Denton, venues keep disappearing. At the beginning of June, we said farewell to **Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios**, whose nineteen years of operation will never go overlooked or underappreciated. The only other punk venue is **J&J's On the Square**. The basement of this classic pizza joint is undergoing remodeling. Who knows what that will entail, but one can only assume the Ol' Dirty Basement will be a little less ol' and dirty the next time we're allowed to go down those stairs.

There's been a small boom in regards to record shops. In Dallas, **Josey Records** has an exhaustive but constantly rotating stock that attracts serious collectors equally as much as vinyl tourists. Their collectibles section is always worth a look. **Spinster** in Oak Cliff is much smaller, but has a stage in the back where SLIMY MEMBER kicked off their tour earlier this year. Located on the outskirts of west Fort Worth, **Docs Records and Vintage** remains a long-standing staple for used records, vintage clothing, and an assortment of pop culture knick-knacks. They have a small yet substantial punk and metal section and an expansive used selection of vinyl spanning all genres. Last year, a new shop called **Born Late Records & Tattoos** opened on Race Street. Their bread and butter is metal albums, but that doesn't mean you won't unearth some punk gems. Up in Denton, you can find **Recycled Books & Records** housed in a massive purple building perched on the corner of the courthouse square. They recently created a separate punk section, which cuts down on the hours you used to have to commit to sifting through their collection. Across the courthouse lawn is **Mad World**, a stand-alone record shop next to an old-fashioned ice cream parlor (sometimes you can smell the waffle cones through the walls). The first face you'll likely see is Jeff Burke, of MARKED MEN and RADIOACTIVITY esteem, manning the register and looking ten times cooler than anyone else without even trying. The punk selection is chock-full of prerequisite reissues and big label new releases.

SSTD



Soy Babies

Dallas

PISSED GRAVE plays brutalizing hardcore punk with elements of crust and grind. They have a cassette out on **Punk Alive Records**.

SLIMY MEMBER was on tour earlier this year, and they've got a new LP coming soon, so they're keeping busy. The band grabs their name and stylings from Rudimentary Peni, so if creepy echo-y graveyard jams are what you want, that's what you'll get. SSTD is a spinoff of SLIMY MEMBER with a different vocalist. It's a bit rough around the edges but fast and fun and has some of that spooky SLIMY spirit.

PAVEL CHEKOV plays blistering fastcore. Blastbeats break down, heaviness encroaches. If any iteration of fast punk interests you, don't sleep on this band.

STEEL BEARING HAND has been playing their unique brand of death metal-oriented thrash since 2010. With a few tours and a self-titled LP under their belts, they are one of the area's most prominent metal bands.

The Gonzalez family—Dennis and his sons Stefan and Aaron—have been molding the Dallas music landscape into a more diverse and experimental place for many years. They're responsible for the following projects: renowned jazz combo YELLS AT EELS, badass "ritualistic improv Jazz-Rock" project UNCONSCIOUS COLLECTIVE (where, at performances, all of the members are nearly naked and speckled with tribal paint), Stefan's avant-garde percussion improv project ORGULLO PRIMITIVO, Aaron's deranged vocal improv project DEFLOWERED ELECTRIC FLESH BRIDE, and last but certainly the most exciting, the recently reunited and prestigious punk/jazz/grind duo AKKOLYTE. This family cannot be stopped. It is worth noting that Stefan books the **Outward Bound Mixtape Sessions**, a recurring Monday night show at RBC in Deep Ellum where local and touring bands alike are given free license to experiment on stage.

SERIOUS SHIT plays crust-laden hardcore that will occasionally broach on melodies reminiscent of early '80s emo. They have a few cassette releases and went on their second tour in June.

TBA, in addition to having the most obnoxious band name in DFW, shares members with SERIOUS SHIT and joined them on tour this summer. TBA plays straightforward powerviolence that sets itself apart with occasional pop punk melodies. Vocalist Crystal Redeagle's high pitched shrieks sound almost inhuman and contribute an element of chaos to instrumentation strong enough to stand on its own. They will have a split 7" coming out soon with Dallas' PAVEL CHEKOV.

Arlington-based TOLAR called it quits recently after well over a decade of dishing out crushing D-beat and metal influenced hardcore. They were one of DFW's longest running punk bands and while they will be sorely missed, members of TOLAR, BANRAN, and WILD//TRIBE have already started a new Swedish-style hardcore band, OBSTRUCTION.

Ft Worth

SOY BABIES is a group of kids that began playing shows in June of 2015. Their brand of slow, lurching, nihilistic post-punk-meets-No Wave was completely unexpected when they started off. As of now, all they've released is a two-song rehearsal tape/demo recorded last year, but they're working on new material to record by the end of this summer.

Denton

The NOIDS consists of three UNT art school kids playing self-proclaimed "pogo punk" that pulls influence from the URINALS and adds elements of post-punk through discordant guitar and contrasting duel vocals. They dropped two cassettes in 2015, *Demo 1* and *Modern Life*, and are currently working on a third tape ahead of their Midwest tour this July.

LAUGHTER shares members with the NOIDS and is a band that formed less than a week before their first show at Everything Is Not OK. By their fourth show, they recorded a tape released by Oklahoma City label City Baby. The group is fronted by the talented and ostentatious former DIGI-BOYS vocalist Josh Flores, who isn't afraid to get in your face and on the floor. LAUGHTER is working on a second tape.

RITUAL ORDER is perhaps the newest band in Denton, as they just played their first show at the end of May. The band was formed from the ashes of the now-defunct punk band SMEAR. They're playing Sisters of Mercy-influenced gothic punk (or as the band calls it, "Goth For Cowboys").

ELIX-R is an all-female group, which is unfortunately a rarity in our region. Most of the members didn't know how to play their instruments prior to this band. They were practically unavoidable on lineups last winter after releasing a demo of stripped down punk that was passed around online.

RAZORBUMPS shares members with RITUAL ORDER and ELIX-R. They play abrasive yet poppy rock'n'roll punk with sharp guitar tones and vocals that combine the snottiness of BRATMOBILE with the melodic rhythmic tones of contemporaries CCTV. While they have yet to play a show, the quality of the demo alone is worth a mention.

COLLICK are a Denton hardcore band heavily influenced by HÜSKER DÜ's catalog. The intricate songwriting has a lot of contrast and demands sharp technique from every member. They have a full-length self-titled record that might be ready for you to check out by the time you're reading this.

After nearly a decade of extensive touring and a slew of 7" releases, STYMIE are putting out their first LP *Condescending World* on DFW-based **Rabid Dog Records**. They take influence from the likes of D4, LEATHERFACE, and SCREECHING WEASEL. Every song they write is better than the last (and the last song was great).

Since 2011, BAD TIMES has been playing power pop-punk through a *Full Moon Fever* meets *Is This Real?* filter. The lyrics tend to slant dark but are interwoven with a sense of humor that is more aligned with the generally upbeat and frequently catchy songwriting.

THIN SKIN is bratty girl vocals punctured with cutesy baby squeals on top of loose and repetitive party punk that tends to break down into garbled no wave madness.

There is a cluster of busy Denton bands that overlaps members yet spans genres from emo to sludgy stoner rock. It contains MIMISIKU, WHIMPER, BIGHAND// BIGKNIFE, FLESH BORN, NEW SCIENCE PROJECTS, TWO KNIGHTS, a few bands that don't exist anymore, and surely some other secret projects. All of these bands contain some or all of the following musicians: Parker Lawson, Donovan Ford (the most obsessive gearhead you'll ever meet), and Miles Debruin. You can hear math and/or emo influence in their projects, some more overt than others. Any project involving this prolific group of wacky bananas is sure to stand out in its own right, despite the multitude of genres they span.

Local Labels

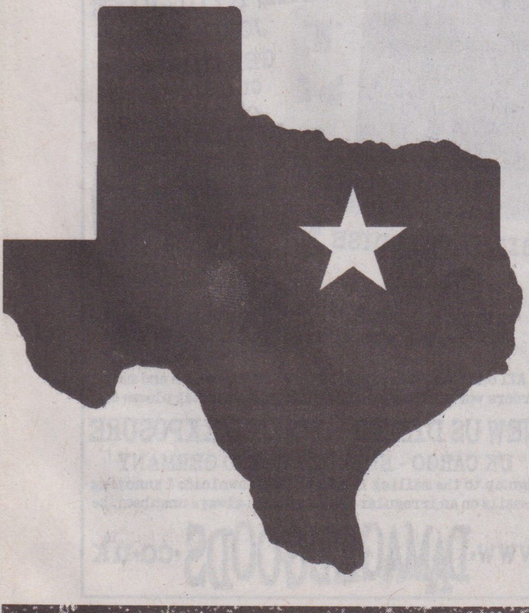
Punk Alive is a Dallas-based label run by DFW punk vet Matt Lutrell. With a focus on the harder side of punk, he's released cassettes for PISSED GRAVE, SLIMY MEMBER, COLLICK, and TBA, among others. The label also includes a distro of punk and hardcore records.

Based out of Ft. Worth, **Rabid Dog Records** is responsible for vinyl releases for HATRED SURGE, WILD//TRIBE, and STYMIE, and has also released cassettes for MUNICIPAL WASTE and MDC.

Will Mecca's **Left Hand Path Tapes** releases cassettes as well as VHS tapes, including his popular live footage & interviews in the *Paranoid Anxieties* series.

Sarcophagus Club is a brand new DIY tape label in Denton. They've put out the RITUAL ORDER and RAZORBUMPS tapes with handmade artwork.

Ultimately, three cities working in tandem results in a healthy scene. Sometimes it feels stagnant if you aren't paying attention to the "other cities," which is an easy trap to fall into. But there's always someone scheming in a garage or basement how to push things further, be it through a new band, label, or house venue, and that's what makes DFW punk continue to thrive through the highs and the lows that are endemic of any scene.



ELIX-R

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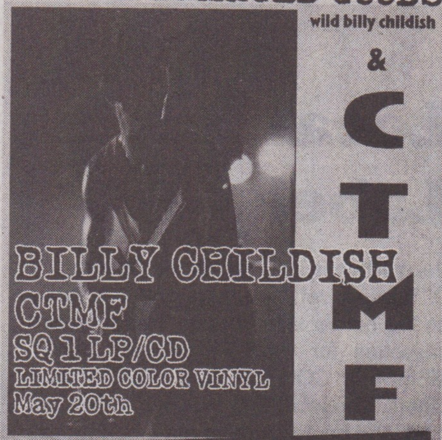

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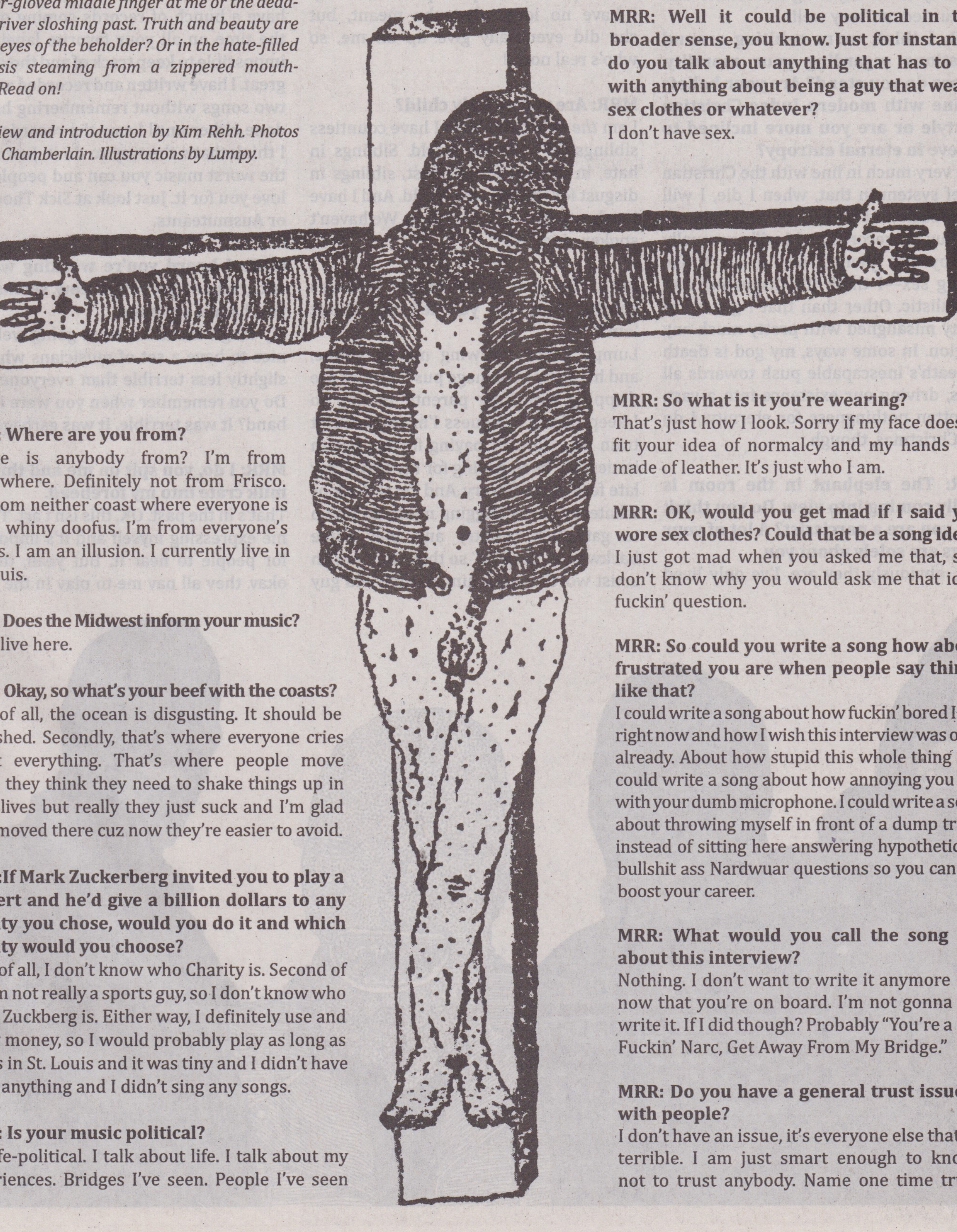
BLACK PANTIES

I met Black Panties under a bridge where he slumped in black leather garb, melting into a trash heap and staring at a burned-out crater that had probably been a bonfire five years ago. For a masked misanthrope, he carries little mystery in his responses and body language—he hardly moved except to raise a leather-gloved middle finger at me or the dead-muck river sloshing past. Truth and beauty are in the eyes of the beholder? Or in the hate-filled halitosis steaming from a zippered mouth-hole? Read on!

Interview and introduction by Kim Rehh. Photos by Jon Chamberlain. Illustrations by Lumpy.



MRR: Where are you from?
Where is anybody from? I'm from everywhere. Definitely not from Frisco. I'm from neither coast where everyone is a big, whiny doofus. I'm from everyone's minds. I am an illusion. I currently live in St. Louis.

MRR: Does the Midwest inform your music?
I just live here.

MRR: Okay, so what's your beef with the coasts?
First of all, the ocean is disgusting. It should be abolished. Secondly, that's where everyone cries about everything. That's where people move when they think they need to shake things up in their lives but really they just suck and I'm glad they moved there cuz now they're easier to avoid.

MRR:If Mark Zuckerberg invited you to play a concert and he'd give a billion dollars to any charity you chose, would you do it and which charity would you choose?
First of all, I don't know who Charity is. Second of all, I'm not really a sports guy, so I don't know who Mark Zuckberg is. Either way, I definitely use and enjoy money, so I would probably play as long as it was in St. Louis and it was tiny and I didn't have to do anything and I didn't sing any songs.

MRR: Is your music political?
It's life-political. I talk about life. I talk about my experiences. Bridges I've seen. People I've seen walking. I don't talk about politicians or stats or delegates or voting. I don't talk about 9/11, I don't talk about president Bush, which I know is a big no no in "punk." Especially in Cali and NYC. Political music is for people who still care and still don't know how to care.

MRR: Well it could be political in the broader sense, you know. Just for instance, do you talk about anything that has to do with anything about being a guy that wears sex clothes or whatever?
I don't have sex.

MRR: So what is it you're wearing?
That's just how I look. Sorry if my face doesn't fit your idea of normalcy and my hands are made of leather. It's just who I am.

MRR: OK, would you get mad if I said you wore sex clothes? Could that be a song idea?
I just got mad when you asked me that, so I don't know why you would ask me that idiot fuckin' question.

MRR: So could you write a song how about frustrated you are when people say things like that?
I could write a song about how fuckin' bored I am right now and how I wish this interview was over already. About how stupid this whole thing is. I could write a song about how annoying you are with your dumb microphone. I could write a song about throwing myself in front of a dump truck instead of sitting here answering hypothetical bullshit ass Nardwuar questions so you can boost your career.

MRR: What would you call the song about this interview?
Nothing. I don't want to write it anymore now that you're on board. I'm not gonna write it. If I did though? Probably "You're a Fuckin' Narc, Get Away From My Bridge."

MRR: Do you have a general trust issue with people?
I don't have an issue, it's everyone else that's terrible. I am just smart enough to know not to trust anybody. Name one time trust

I DON'T HAVE SEX.

did anybody any good. I haven't trusted anybody to do anything in decades and I've turned out very well.

MRR: I think we're orbiting around questions regarding your morality. Where do you stand? Are your beliefs in line with modern Judeo-Christian lifestyle or are you more inclined to believe in eternal entropy?

I am very much in line with the Christian belief system in that, when I die, I will come back and everybody will love me and buy my records and I will eventually destroy this planet. Also I don't like having sex—I think it's disgusting and animalistic. Other than that I guess I'm pretty misaligned with pretty much any religion. In some ways, my god is death or death's inescapable push towards all of us, driving our existence into a vast, forgotten nothingness for eternity. I do like Christmas, though.

MRR: The elephant in the room is finally coming into view. Do you think that you are a narcissist? A lot of your songs are solely about you.

Well, obviously they are. I've only lived my life through one perspective. I had a therapist tell me perception is reality. I have no idea what she meant, but she did eventually give up on me, so who's real now?!

MRR: Are you an only child?

I am *the* only child. Also I have countless siblings all over the world. Siblings in hate, in disdain for the rest, siblings in disgust for the modern world. And I have two brothers and two sisters. We haven't spoken since '93.

MRR: So you have some releases coming out, can you tell me about 'em?

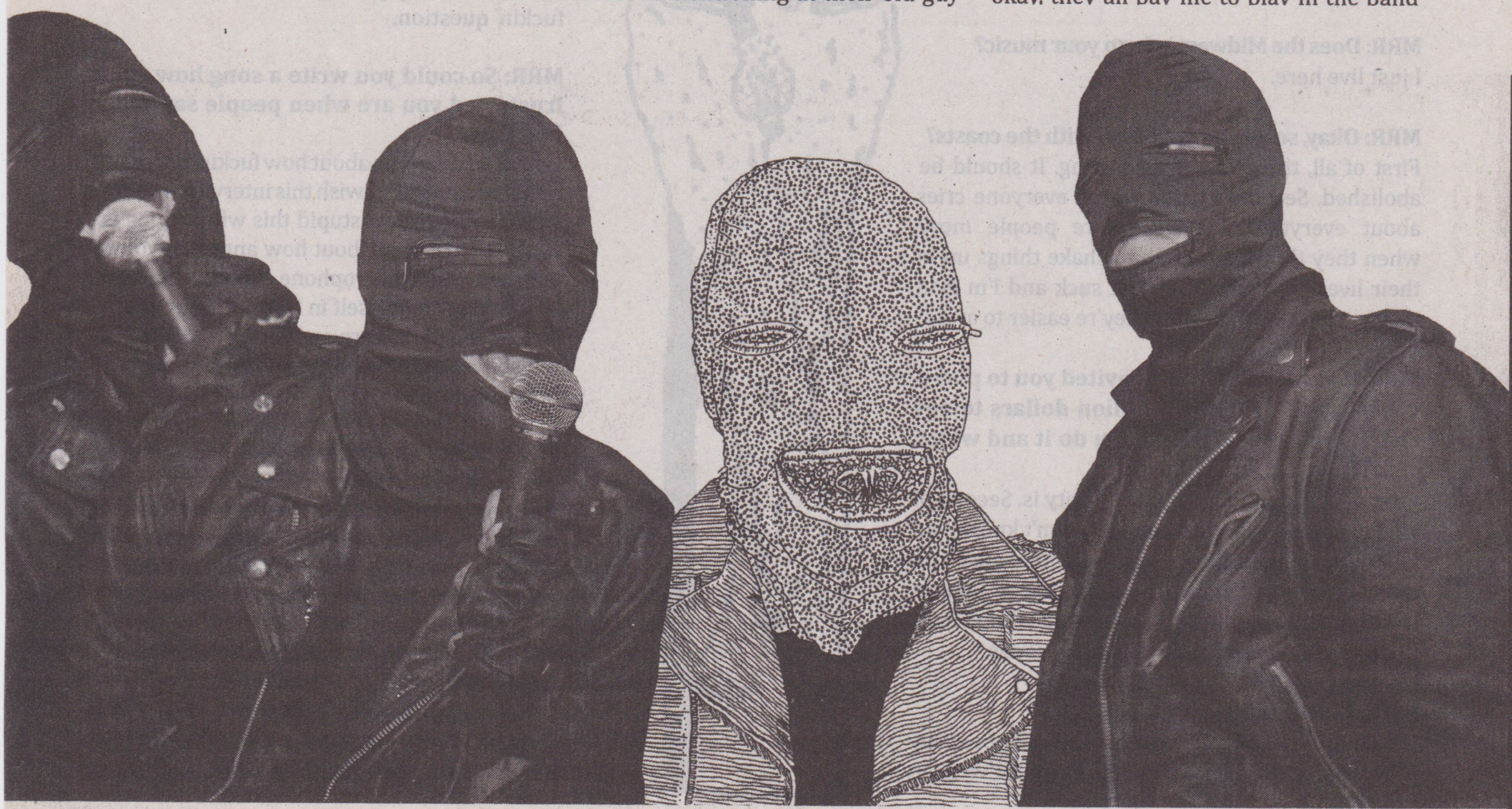
Lumpy keeps throwing money at me, and his army of teenage pus factories are dripping with their parents' money, so I keep taking it. I guess I'm on that shit train now. But it's paying for my health issues; it's been paying for my travel, my late fees at the library. And Total Punk or whatever keeps begging me to go down to gatorfuck country and play some backwoods "festival" so they can have an artist worth mentioning at their old guy convention and throwing 7k to do it. So because of all these rich fuckin' idiots I have a bunch of records coming out all the time on all your favorite labels. It's impossible to keep track of and they're all great. I have written and recorded at least two songs without remembering having done either until I saw the records later. I think that's the way to do it. Just make the worst music you can and people will love you for it. Just look at Sick Thoughts or Ausmuteants.

MRR: I heard you're working with a set group of guys right now, seems like you have a set band.

My magic band. It's been going well. It's nice to have a set of musicians who are slightly less terrible than everyone else. Do you remember when you were in the band? It was terrible. It was garbage.

MRR: I do, you spit on me and threw a milk crate into my forehead.

That's in the past. OK, this isn't art. This is me expressing myself and it's important for people to hear it. But yeah, they're okay, they all pay me to play in the band



cuz they love my songs and they practice all the time and carry all my gear I made them buy. They were in some art band, some psychobilly bullshit called Bug Laser or something kitschy and college. Then they started His Magic Band, just hoping I'd let them play for me. The name didn't make any sense before I let them join, but now it fits. They are a lot of young kids with promising talent. They are obsessed with cards.

MRR: Do you trust any of them?
No. I handle all the money. I do all the driving. I do all the drinking myself. Can't trust anybody these days. Used to be you could hire a group of scabs to live in a van for weeks without pay and they'd be standup people. Times have changed.

MRR: Do you do the booking?
No, that shit's hard and boring, plus people who book shows are total fuckin' losers. I have a lameass manager for that shit. He's not worth mentioning. Next question.

MRR: Do you feel good when five or six people tell you they like your music?
I wouldn't know. People don't buy that shit because it's actually good or they like it, they buy it so they can flip it on Ebay or Discogs. They buy it so they can Instagram it and let it collect dust. They buy it because some fuckin' bozo with a Crass tattoo and a septum piercing wrote like "*Only* in the Midwest can..." or "landlocked hardcore from the plains of the Midwest" and then finished with a "then it grew on me. Worth picking up!" They buy it because being punk is all about doing what everyone else is doing. And right now, that happens to be buying my records. Nobody actually understands this shit. I'm complex. I have things to get out there, man. None of these people actually stop me after the show and say "Hey, good job! You worked hard up there." They just want to be seen.

MRR: Some of the riffs are kinda catchy though.
No they're not. They're cool. I write all these songs for myself because no band is doing anything as cool as this. I had to have at least one band I could listen to without falling asleep or breaking my stereo. Catchy is different. Hanson was catchy. I am a rocker.

MRR: So did Lumpy invent the music you play?
I've been playing this shit since before Lumpy—real name Markus; don't be fooled—crawled out of his fuckin' NASA mom. That kid has no idea what he's doing but he's been going to my shows for a decade with his snotty little nose and his Pog jokes and fuckin' meat stick comedy routines. His label was tanking so he needed to get somebody on it that wasn't just some perverts banging on boxes and yelling (or worse, another #johnbirkner band). He needed me. So we cut a deal and now we're both livin' easy. He gets to be popular and I get to keep building model bridges and buying light up shoes for when I'm in private.

MRR: You hate everyone, including yourself, so no one can really have a problem with you, right?
What a fuckin' stupid question. Skip.

MRR: Do you think anyone would ever kill you?
I like to think that my destiny is in my own hands. I think every human has the right to decide when and how they die. Let's

I'M NOT REAL. I'M A FICTIONAL CHARACTER.

be clear, though—I love thinking about dying. It's what gets me through the tough times in life. But I don't approve of violence. Everybody should be able to fuck themselves up as much as they want without someone else doing the work for them. Maybe I'm too proud, but when I finally stop having to breath and smile, I like to think it'll be my own ingenuity and hard work that made that happen. My new song kinda talks about that.

MRR: Tell me about the new song.
How bout you come to work prepared next time? Maybe you should write an article about that. Next.

MRR: Fine. Your tours, sometimes they get rowdy. Have you ever hurt anyone's feelings?
Never.

MRR: Has anyone ever hurt yours?
All the time. These shows are about myself. I wish people would stop being so selfish while I'm up there spilling my guts. This stuff is really serious to me and it hurts when people are texting during a set or when they laugh in my face or people say mean things. People hurt my feelings by buying my records, coming to my shows, dancing like it's fuckin' salsa hour. You're gonna fuckin' curl up your mustache and tweet about it while I'm trying to make you see the light.

MRR: Even though you don't want anyone to listen to you, do you have any kind of message you want to give to people through your music?
The message is don't be fooled. Nice people will always turn. Trustworthy people will always rob you. Your parents will always keep the basement door locked, even when they said you could come up for some sunlight. Your sister will always get food first and you may get scraps but you will never eat off of a plate. Pastor Dan will always want to talk to you really close after everyone leaves for third prayer. That thing in the shadows will always evade you and laugh at your pain. The Smoking Man will always be one step ahead of Mulder. These are things I've learned in my time on earth.

MRR: So St. Louis seems to be kind of a special scene, a special town musically with lots of crazy personalities. Do you see a resurgence happening here?
Obviously. With all my records coming out and me playing more shows I think St. Louis is a great place to be right now. Sometimes I do have to play with a local group, and it can be really discouraging to see where music is going and where young people are taking it. All St. Louis bands are terrible. There's no rock'n'roll anymore, everyone just wants to get a bowl cut and a dangly earring and be bad at their instruments. It keeps me motivated being the only good band in America.

MRR: What about the rest of the world?
I don't think about it.

MRR: Would you ever go to another country? To play a show?
I'd fly over and maybe play on the plane, but I would absolutely never land. I had a cousin leave the country once, she got food poisoning. They still love me over there though. Italy just begs me to come over. I love upsetting people when they're far away cuz starting fights is easier online.

MRR: Is there any actual business you wanna cover in this interview?
I think I have a lot of records for sale. That's business. Also how about this business? [*middle fingers*]

MRR: How do people buy your records?
With money, usually.

MRR: Yeah, but where?
Sometimes at shows or sometimes just not at shows too. I don't handle a lot of that. My manager does.

MRR: Do you trust your manager?
No, of course not. He's not even real. I'm not real. I'm a fictional character. We all are. None of this is real. Life isn't real. But for real, honestly, behind the scenes my manager is just a front. I do all the hard stuff too. He doesn't do anything at all, it just seems pretty cool to have a manager. I heard even Chris Kattan has one now. That dude is funny.

MRR: Do you think style is important?
I think I look great. Do a closer. I'm not doing any more questions without charging more.

MRR: What's your definition of fear?
Terrible closing question. You really fuckin' blew this interview. Have fun working in restaurants forever.

A new LP Dead & Gone *is out now on Lumpy Records.*
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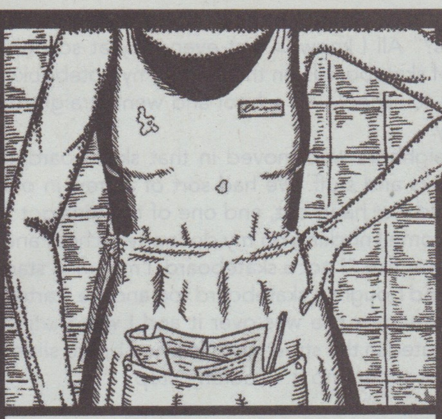

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I met Shari in Vancouver, BC; we both worked at a skateshop and she was definitely one of the coolest people I met there! Shortly after I moved back to France she started the Skate Witches collective and the band Skitch with her friend Kristin. A few months ago they did a European trip together during which they stopped in Lyon. We spent a few days skateboarding, snacking, and chilling. Eventually we sat down in my living room to talk about all the cool projects they are a part of in the skate and punk communities in the Northwest.

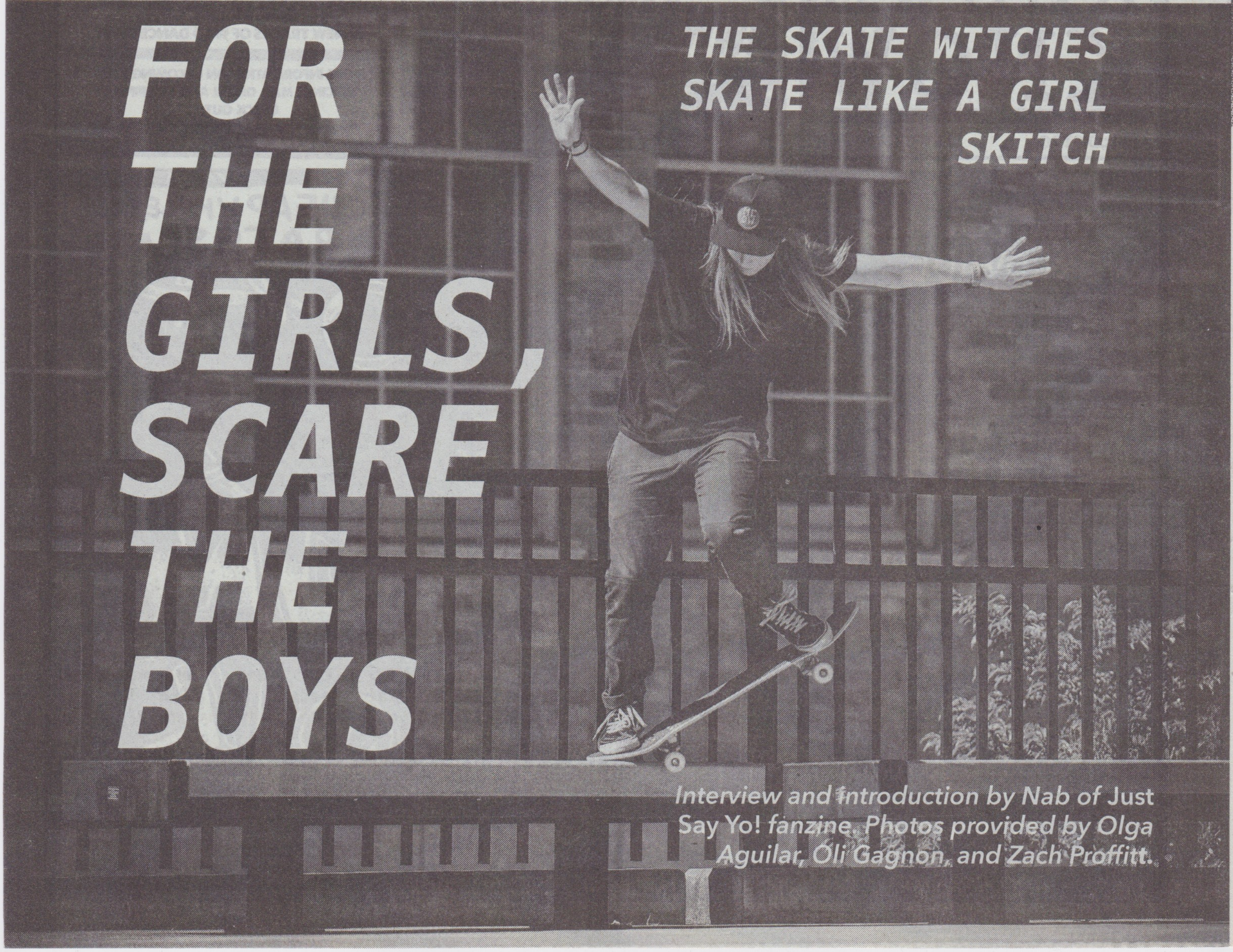
MRR: Can you introduce yourselves?
Shari: Hi, we are the Skate Witches! My name is Shari, I'm originally from Australia, currently living in Vancouver, Canada.
Kristin: My name is Kristin, I'm from Seattle. What else do you want to know?

MRR: Mm…like how did you get into skateboarding?
Kristin: I was the girl who played football at recess. All my guy friends started skating in sixth grade, so I followed. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater was becoming really popular. A couple of my girlfriends at the time who were part of our crew started skating as well, but then within a year everybody pretty much quit and I felt like a weirdo. Like, "Why am I still into this?" All I know is that every day at school I was doodling pictures of skateboards on the side of my notebooks, brought my skateboard to school, left school and went straight to the skate park every day.
Shari: We had some neighbors who moved in that skateboarded and they had little flatbars and stuff. We had sort of a crew in our little cul-de-sac, we would just hang out, and one of the girls got a skateboard. She would come knocking on my door after school and we would play, and she was like "I got a skateboard, I'm gonna start skateboarding!" I went and bought a skateboard too and we started skateboarding. After six months she was over it and I was skating with the boys that also skated in the street and I learned board slides and stuff like that, so I got super into it. I couldn't stop.

MRR: Together you do the Skate Witches. How would you define it? Is it a collective? A crew? A team?
Kristin: I prefer the word "cult." *[laughs]*
Shari: It's more of a zine. I feel like we want to be inclusive and include anybody who wants to be a part of it. It's not like a team where you are like "OK, these are the riders." A zine is really inclusive for everybody. Everybody can be a part of it.
Kristin: It's a zine and a community. There are some outlets, like mags, videos, contests, etc for girls that are really, *really* good at the "top," but there aren't really opportunities in our community that includes everybody. So our whole thought is to make the zine and

FOR THE GIRLS, SCARE THE BOYS

THE SKATE WITCHES SKATE LIKE A GIRL SKITCH



Interview and introduction by Nab of Just Say Yo! fanzine. Photos provided by Olga Aguilar, Óli Gagnon, and Zach Proffitt.

create this culture of our own that's outside of the mainstream. We promote both girls at the "top," like Samarria Brevard or Vanessa Torres, but also at the same time promote girls who aren't as well known. Now girls everywhere have a reason to go out and shoot a photo or now they have an excuse to link up with us in a random city and skate or participate by submitting content or whatever. I think it's about creating more opportunities for girls.

MRR: When did that start? How did you get the idea?

Shari: It started with the All City Showdown in Seattle.

Kristin: ACS is like a street filing contest for which I was approached to put together the first all-girls team. At that time, I had just met Shari and she lived close, so she was definitely in. We were trying to think of a team name and for a while there's been a pretty funny cult video called "The Skate Witches." We just thought it was perfect—it's totally sarcastic and the girls are super punk rock, pushing dudes over…we just felt like that really spoke to us.

Shari: It was meant to just be fun. I think we made stickers and would go around and hand it to girls like "Hey, you're a skate witch!" We made t-shirts and we wanted to make a little zine to throw in there, but we thought "No, let's make the zine more important."

MRR: What was the response? Did you have a lot of support from the get-go?

Kristin: Yeah, I mean…with mainstream skateboarding there's like styles or niches, right? Like the Creature stuff is for bros that wanna rip pools and rails, or there's like Cliché that's more arty and Euro-style… and I feel like the niche that we're filling is something that hasn't been captured yet. There's Meow Skateboards that we both ride for, there's Hoopla, too. There's that vibe, and then there's Silly Girl Skateboards, which is more girly and fun I'd say. What we're doing has more of an eerie or witchy sort of vibe…

Shari: …a little more badass maybe? We're not trying to be like, "Oh we're girls, we love to skateboard hi hi"…But we're not trying to put up a front either, just being ourselves I guess, and people relate to that.

MRR: Crews are usually a regional thing, but the Skate Witches seems more like an international congregation or something…

Kristin: Yeah, we're including everybody. If you want to be a Skate Witch, you are one. Maybe it has to do with my personal experiences. I'm a big advocate of inclusivity. Some people complain like "Oh, Ryan Sheckler is such a douchebag and makes skateboarding looks so stupid," but last time I checked, whenever I step on my skateboard I still have fun, so it doesn't matter who's doing it. I feel like nothing is to be lost if everyone in the world skateboarded. I think that would be awesome. I don't fit in with mainstream skate culture, so I'll be damned if the culture I'm trying to create is going to exclude others. I just think that's stupid.

MRR: Everything you do screams DIY. Is it on purpose or by a lack of means? Would you see the Skate Witches becoming something bigger?

Shari: Is it because we're cheap and it's the cheapest way to do something? *[laughs]* We have fun doing it that way, I get to learn new skills, I really like learning something new. It's my excuse to do more art and design layouts and stuff, that's my favorite part.

Kristin: We have a lot more fun doing things ourselves. Starting to write again for me was really fun. I always had a weird sense of humor, so this project gives me an outlet for that. We get to meet people too! Last night we all went out to see that band La Misma, and I wanted to talk to them because I thought they were really cool. Having a zine to give them allowed me to do that.

MRR: It's funny how we just skated around the other day and you literally recruited girls in the streets to come skate with you. Does it happen back home?

Shari: Yeah definitely, it's not just like "oh you're a girl that skates? I'm a girl that skates too, let's be friends!" We just always have stickers and stuff that we give to people we meet. We're down to shred!

Kristin: I remember being "cool-guyed" a lot when I started skating. Now I'm older and have a lot of confidence, mainly because I'm a better skateboarder and have been around for a while. I'm usually with my wolfpack of lady skaters now. I love walking up to the youngest girl, or a beginner just learning to push, and being like, "What's up, here's a zine. How's it going? I'm Kristin." Hopefully that will start to change the culture a little bit, because news flash: Skateboarders are NOT too cool to be friends with each other *[laughs]*.

MRR: Let's talk about your band, Skitch. When did you start playing together?

Kristin: So, my friend Ambika, I've known her forever, she was living in Florida for years but every summer would come up to Seattle and we'd skate together. She moved to Seattle for good, so we instantly started skating together all the time. She was the only other girl in Seattle who wanted to skate every day. No joke, she would hit me up *every day*! One day she brought me a t-shirt. It was her band from back in Florida called Grommet and on the shirt was a picture of a girl doing an invert and I was like "Wow, is it all girls?" She said "Yeah, all girls, and we all skate too," so I was like "Wait, why don't we start a band!?"

So we started jamming. I got hit up by this DIY skatepark in Seattle called Marginal Way about playing a benefit show—I have no idea how they found out we started a band, but they needed another band to play so I said yes! Long story short, we had no bass player a week before the show. Shari can tell the rest, this is my favorite part. *[laughs]*

Shari: I was coming to Seattle for the weekend and Kristin told me about the show. And then she said, "Oh we don't have a bass player, you should play bass!" I was like "*Oooook*, but I don't know how to play bass." We went to the living room, they taught me the chords to four songs and a cover and we played a show that very same night! *[laughs]* I got home after that weekend like "Fuck, I'm playing bass now!" so I bought a bass and started practicing at home.

MRR: Have you gotten support from the punk scene?

Shari: Yeah, I guess. Our friends in punk bands want to play with us. We played like a dozen shows since. We played that G.L.O.S.S show recently, our friend Chelsey got us on that show and she's super punk!

Kristin: We played the Wheels of Fortune (a girls skate competition in Seattle) welcome party and our friend Chelsey had come up from the Bay. Right before the show she told me she wanted to interview us. She's in a band down in Oakland called Pig DNA and she was coming back up here on tour.

MRR: Do you feel that as girls, you have to face the same fucked up expectations when you skate and when you play music?

Kristin: 100%, it's exactly the same. When we play a show and we're setting up, I love to talk super sarcastic and see who understands. A little bit ago in Squamish, BC, I was like, "Hey, we're the girl band this evening, thank you *sooo much* for having us!" and this one dude was like, "You guys actually sounded really good!" *[laughs]* A lot of guys won't let me borrow their amps, like I'm an idiot, and other stuff like that too. Whatever, bro.

MRR: I was gonna ask if you were planning on recording any music soon, but then I just saw that you have a new tape out.

Shari: Yeah, it took quite some time to get it done, but it's done now and we just have to get tapes dubbed…

MRR: OK, so it's not out yet…

Shari: Yeah, yeah it is, but some of them sounded like doom metal! We just have to get a good tape dubber and make some more.

Kristin: We recorded late June/early July at the Vera Project in Seattle and later it was mixed by Dave from Hoopsnake up in Squamish, BC. The original mix was like "Is this my band from eighth grade?" *[laughs]* It sounded weird. We didn't really know what we were getting into.

MRR: I put it on but haven't had the chance to check out the lyrics. What are the songs about?

Kristin: Hmm you know, trying to survive in the matriarchy. *[laughs]* Every song is different, but our whole band's mantra—and in the Skate Witches, too—is "For the girls," so I always try to keep that in mind. I feel like, as a female in skateboarding and music, the things I get stressed out about like "Oh I'm so embarrassed, I'm about to play a show." But in reality, if I fuck up, I fuck up in front of other girls, they have my back, so I don't care. I feel like there's this mutual support. With guys it'd be like, "Oh, surprising, girl just fucked up!" I don't know, maybe it's just in my fucking head, that insecurity. If you take away what you think some dude is gonna think of you, you have more fun. That's what I try to embody.

Shari: It's like with skateboarding, it's like "urgh!" It's the same shit.

Kristin: Yeah, exactly. "What am I doing, am I doing this trick for me or am I doing it so some dude will be like "that's sick!"? I feel like as a woman you have to check yourself on that, so our whole mantra being "For the girls," that's what I write about. Specific things, if I look through the lyrics, there's this part that's about my friend Muriel and how

one time she was raging at the skatepark and one dude turns to me and say "I heard that girl's *craaaazy.*" That's a line in the song. Or just mocking dudes in general: "So how does it feel being a girl in a band? Sick, can we make out?" I guess my version of feminism is "OK, these guys are being such assholes, how can I be funnier and more of a dick to them back?" because that's way better use of my energy in my opinion.
Shari: ...and for them to actually realize, because if you get in their faces about it like "*Fuck you,*" they're going to be defensive. Whereas if you make fun of them they're all upset. Sometimes they won't even get that we're making fun of them, it's the best.

MRR: So it's very much a skate punk band…
Kristin: We're trying to reclaim skate punk because if you think about it, skate punk is the stupidest shit ever.
Shari: Technically we skate and we play punk.

MRR: Kristin, I know you're involved with the Skate Like a Girl organization.
Kristin: SLAG started in 2000, very riot grrrl kind of inspired DIY…the two founders went to Evergreen College, which was a hotbed for that kind of stuff at that time. They started it and a few years later moved to Seattle, became an official organization—a federally recognized nonprofit.

In 2007 I found out about SLAG because they were throwing a girls' contest and I was like "Pff, I don't know any other girl skaters." So I showed up, it was at my local skate park, and I see this girl ollie eight stairs, this other girl boardslide the handrail. These other girls were making snow cones and running the whole thing, I was like "OMG, where am I?"

wAfter that experience, I wanted to be a part of that community. I started volunteering teaching and worked my way to where I am now. These days I'm the director and it's my full-time job, but I volunteered for seven or eight years teaching, running events, organizing skate tours, organizing the Wheels of Fortune contests, after-school programs, and camps. I've taught girls, boys, parents. *[laughs]* I basically teach anyone and everyone how to skate. Our whole mission is to make a more inclusive community.
Shari: You can really see it in the younger boys. They're a couple years into skateboarding and they're volunteering. In that whole Seattle skate community, the boys have a way better outlook on skateboarding compared to like ten years ago. They see Skate Like a Girl and their view on girl skateboarding is totally different to a lot of younger boys.
Kristin: They're not gonna say something to a girl skater like, "Whoa, I didn't know a girl could do that!" Their perspective is that anybody can skateboard, and that's what our goal is.

MRR: That's awesome. I'm a firm believer that by teaching the younger generations that's how you get to have an impact or make a difference or whatever. That's how things can move forward.
Kristin: I think that if a little boy learns from me, a female, he's going to have a way different perspective on skateboarding, and on life in general, than his counterparts that didn't learn from a woman. In most people's mind, skateboarding is a macho or a guy sort of thing to do, so if they learn to do that thing from a female, their perspective on who can participate is going to be different.

MRR: With doing so much cool stuff, do you see yourselves as role models for younger girls in your scene? Who were your role models when you started?
Kristin: I work with kids, so I just try to live a really healthy and positive life that's full of rad experiences. I like to share these things and this energy with the kids…When I was younger, the people I was looking up to were pretty fucked up. I certainly never had any girl that skated who was a role model to me. I knew some skate guys that were heavy drinkers and did drugs, and they piled out. They weren't a good influence on me. Where are they now? I don't know. I don't think they skate, I don't see them around, you know? My hope is that when I'm fifty or sixty I'm still rolling around and part of the scene, like my friend Marshall. I want people to recognize me as a positive person in their life. I'm sure there are a lot of kids whose parents would rather them be doing other things, like tennis or something, where they're not gonna get hurt, that could get them into a good college, or that's more "productive." I think it's sick to be an adult in youth's lives that is living that and being successful in skateboarding. In that sense I can see me as a role model, but not in a cheesy way. I guess I hope kids look up to me instead of some other jackass. *[laughs]*
Shari: I'm not involved in the skate community as much as Kristin so I don't know how often I can be considered a role model. You never know who you might be affecting. If I was to be someone's role model, I wouldn't be the worst. My role models (as far as skateboarders

when I grew up) were like stoners who drank and were good at skateboarding. My first girl role model skateboarder would have to be Kristin. I had other friends, girls, that skateboarded, but she is actually productive and doing positive shit for girls skateboarding which inspires me.

MRR: What can you tell me about the Wheels of Fortune contest?

Kristin: It's a Skate Like A Girl event that we do every year in the mentality that I was talking about with the Skate Witches zine, as far as providing opportunities. We're trying to provide another outlet. It wouldn't be realistic for me to be like, "OK, we're gonna shoot this photo for *Thrasher* and send it in, they're gonna print our stuff!" That's not realistic, so we created our own thing, the Skate Witches zine, to build that community. Wheels of Fortune is in the same vein. Not every girl is going make the top ten in the world that gets into the street league or X-Games or whatever. So we made Wheels of Fortune.

For a lot of up and coming female skaters it's a great foot in the door for them to get exposure in the small community of female skateboarding. We work really hard to raise money in order to make sure we can have really good filming content, a solid prize purse, and help people with accommodation. We want it to be accessible.

What we do is people usually fly into Seattle on Friday and we throw a big party. The next day we meet up at a skate park and all 100 or more of us mob out from there and we all break off and skate the city. Sunday is the contest. The whole idea is not so much about the competitive side, it's more about the community building. I think my favorite memory from this last Wheels of Fortune was sitting around a campfire after skating one night, with all these girls from all over the world—Arizona, California, Austria, the UK, and local girls too, Shari was in town… it's about creating that sisterhood and solidarity. We try to take that mainstream skateboarding culture and flip it over. "What are the things that suck about mainstream skate culture? Oh yeah, let's not do that."

MRR: So obviously there's a big emphasis on deconstructing gender role in what you do. My question may be dumb but is feminism on the foreground of the girl skateboarding culture you're a part of? Because from what I've heard some girls would rather "leave the politics out of it" and just skate.

Kristin: I'm definitely a feminist. I'm gonna speak my mind about it, but I'm also gonna be out there skating and working my ass off to make a cool scene happen. Feminism is such a loaded word, I feel like everyone's entitled to their own interpretation and opinion on whether or not they consider themselves a feminist. And also it's problematic because of inequality and people's access to education, so not everyone knows what that word means. So, I wouldn't make fun of someone if they didn't understand that a guy could be a feminist for instance. I think it's about dialog, but also working your ass off with making things happen. Guys' mainstream skateboarding is not gonna care about girls skateboarding, especially not in the way that we do, so it's on us to make stuff happen.

Shari: …and not worry about what the boys will think of it. Just do your shit, try hard, skate hard. Make something.

Kristin: It's not always easy. You have to kind of call yourself out on it, or each other. I feel like that's something we got good at. Like when we were at the ramp yesterday with all these dudes I didn't know. I started feeling shy. Shari was like "Fuck that, don't be! Let's have fun." We need to push each other.

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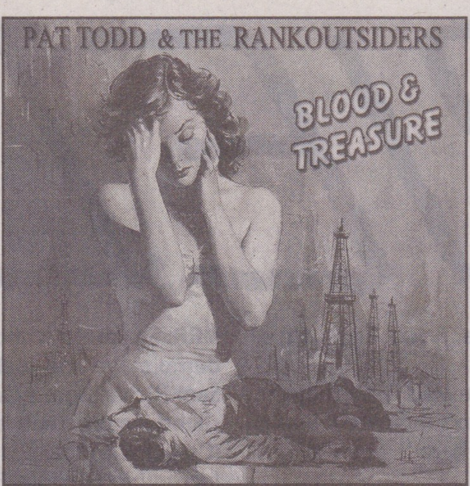

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FRIED E

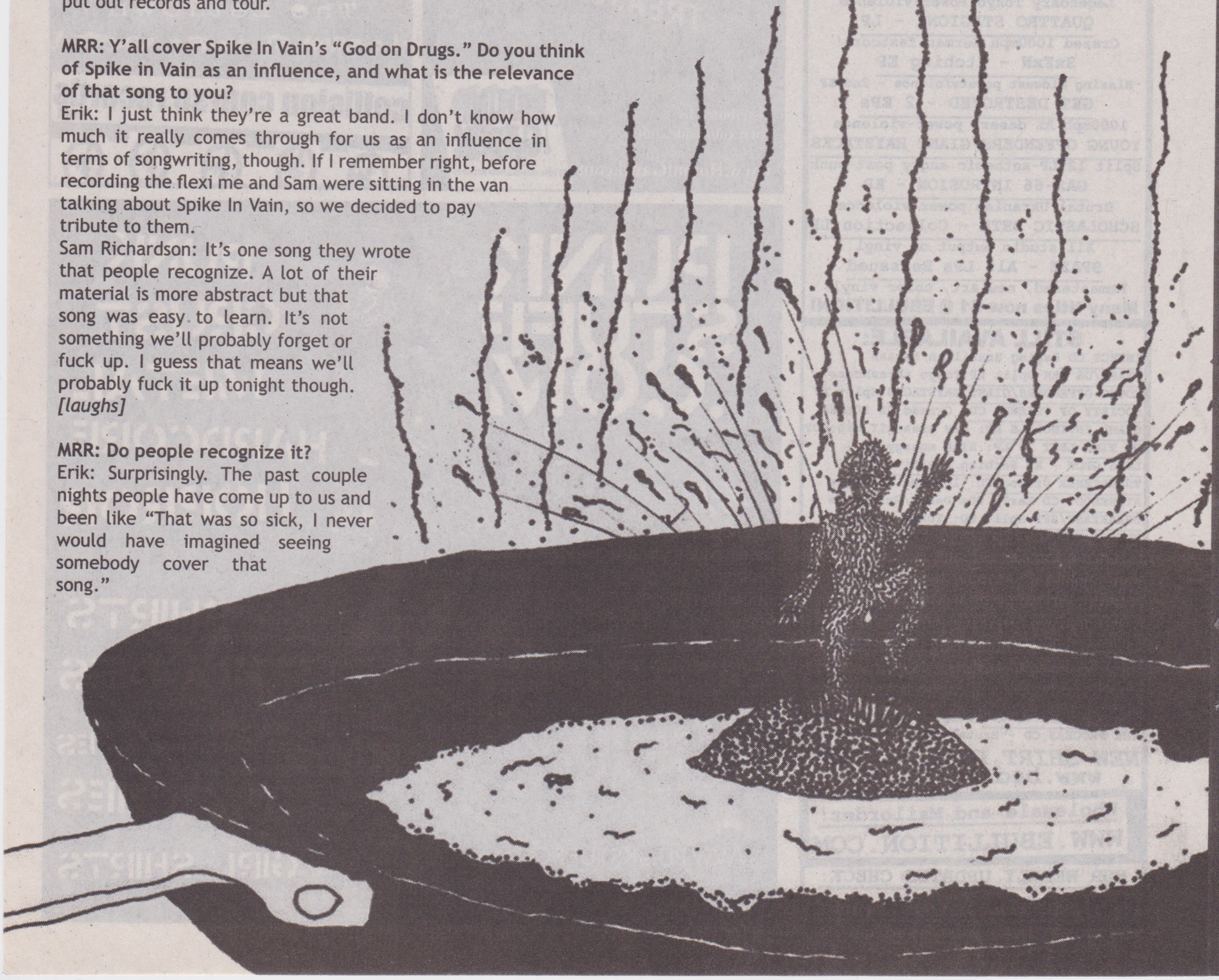
MRR: How did you decide on the name Fried Egg? It's a reference to the Mad, right?
Sam Richardson: I took inspiration from the Mad but I thought it was kind of a cool abstract name that didn't indicate it was a generic hardcore or punk band. The name hadn't been taken, surprisingly.

MRR: Was there an intention with Fried Egg to do something different from what had been going on in Richmond in the past?
Erik: I don't think that was specifically our intention originally. I think we wanted to be good—I don't know if that separates us from some stuff. It was definitely a goal from the beginning to put out records and tour.

MRR: Y'all cover Spike In Vain's "God on Drugs." Do you think of Spike in Vain as an influence, and what is the relevance of that song to you?
Erik: I just think they're a great band. I don't know how much it really comes through for us as an influence in terms of songwriting, though. If I remember right, before recording the flexi me and Sam were sitting in the van talking about Spike In Vain, so we decided to pay tribute to them.
Sam Richardson: It's one song they wrote that people recognize. A lot of their material is more abstract but that song was easy to learn. It's not something we'll probably forget or fuck up. I guess that means we'll probably fuck it up tonight though. *[laughs]*

MRR: Do people recognize it?
Erik: Surprisingly. The past couple nights people have come up to us and been like "That was so sick, I never would have imagined seeing somebody cover that song."

MRR: So you guys chose to completely skip over the traditional demo stage and just go straight to a flexi.
Sam Richardson: I thought it would be hilarious to do. It costs slightly more than a pro demo tape and it's a cool format. It's quick to make. I had the concept, I wanted to call it *The Incredible Flexible Egg*, and I thought it was kinda ridiculous, but I wanted to see if we could do it. It's a band imprint that did it, so it was cool for us to work together and get it out. It was just enough music to fit on there, and we wound up not even using most of the rest of the session. In a way, I like that we did a three-song flexi instead of a six-song tape.



GG

Richmond, VA's Fried Egg are the real deal, serving up a straight-to-business blend of rock'n'roll muscle and hardcore punk fury with a dose of snot for good measure. Last year they skipped right over the conventional demo tape and graced punk fiends everywhere with a grade-A flexi disk entitled The Incredible Flexible Egg. *Now, with a new 7" and tape in the works as well as a slew of tour dates, I'm already calling 2016 the year of the Egg. This Spring I got the chance to chat with Fried Egg a few hours before they sonically annihilated a basement full of lucky, sweaty Baltimoreans. Interview and introduction by William Chapman. Photos provided by Kevin Brinson, Juliana Caycedo, and Adam Juresko. Drawing by Lumpy.*

MRR: I know you guys have some releases in the works, can you talk a little about those?
Sam Richardson: We are working on a Fried Egg mixtape on our imprint, which will probably be out in the fall, given how long compilations take. We are trying to make it a good mix, so there will be funny stuff like prank phone calls, terrible synth music, laughable stuff, people making jokes, and we might get our friend to do some emceeing to introduce some of the artists. Fried Egg have some tracks lying around that will go on there, plus tracks from some other bands we've been in. There's a Cretins track, some regional stuff, a Deformity track we all really like, and some Australian bands. As far as Fried Egg goes, we're doing a 7" on Negative Jazz, a California label.

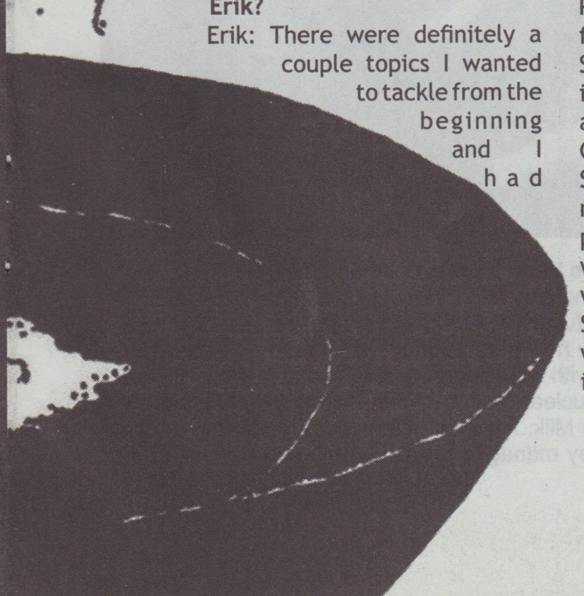
MRR: Touring?
Erik: We did a ten-day tour around Horrible Fest in June, playing Pittsburgh and Buffalo as well as a few dates in Canada. A solid chunk of that tour was with Quitter from Baltimore as well.

MRR: When it comes to writing lyrics, how does that process work for you, Erik?
Erik: There were definitely a couple topics I wanted to tackle from the beginning and I had outlines of what I wanted to say. Like one of the new songs is about being mixed-race and not really being sure where you belong or what you even have a right to claim about your background. A lot of the others are focused on alienation, self-loathing, that kind of stuff, but I think I've gotten a lot better in terms of capturing what I wanna convey. In the first few songs on the flexi, I feel like I was kind of struggling with that and I feel like I'm getting better and better at it.

MRR: What have you all been listening to lately?
Tyler: I haven't stopped listening to the new Sin Motivo record since it came out.
Erik: I've been really getting back into a lot of '60s garage shit after not listening to that for a while. That's most of what I've bought on this weekend so far.
Sam Richardson: A lot of the Kinks, always. I have been jamming on this Australian noise rock band called Lubricated Goat that I draw a lot of influence from, Crap Detectors, and a lot of Motörhead (RIP Lemmy).

MRR: Anything else you all wanna add?
Erik: We all ate eggs this morning. Poached and scrambled though, no fried.
Sam Richardson: If you are in an interesting punk or hardcore band and want to play Richmond or Charlottesville, please hit us up! Sometimes people think Richmond might not be as cool as it was when popular bands like Government Warning were around, but it's still kicking in one way or another.
Sam Robert: Play Charlottesville if you want to play to people who are easily impressed, which is fun.

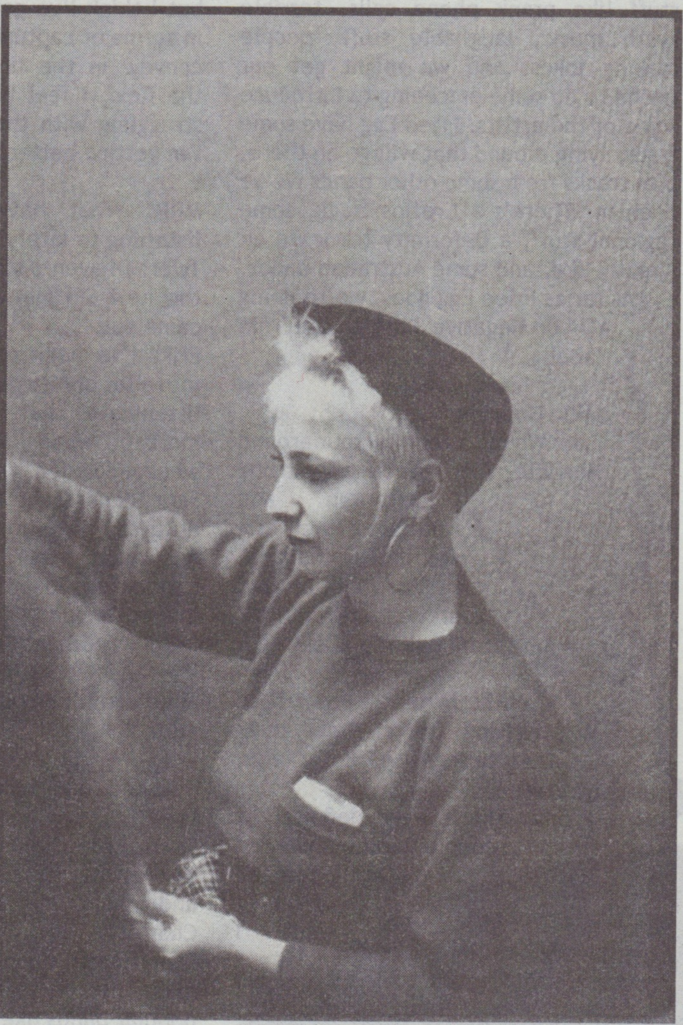
friedeggva.bandcamp.com



PSYCHO SQUATT & MALOKA RECORDS

My French love—Psycho Squatt! Some time ago I got Psycho Squatt's debut LP. I'm crazy about it. I am not and never will be a big fan of punk rock from France. Though, I love Heimat-Los, I love Scraps, and I really like the French bands with female vocals, like La Fraction. There's also Psycho Squatt. I had the pleasure of seeing them in May 2014 in Berlin, when after the Conflict gig our crew went to squat Kopi. This band's songs have the potential to become as familiar and loved as La Fraction's—they should be playing all of the good festivals! Maybe this interview will be the first step in that direction.

Interview by Grzester.
Originally printed in Pasazer #32.

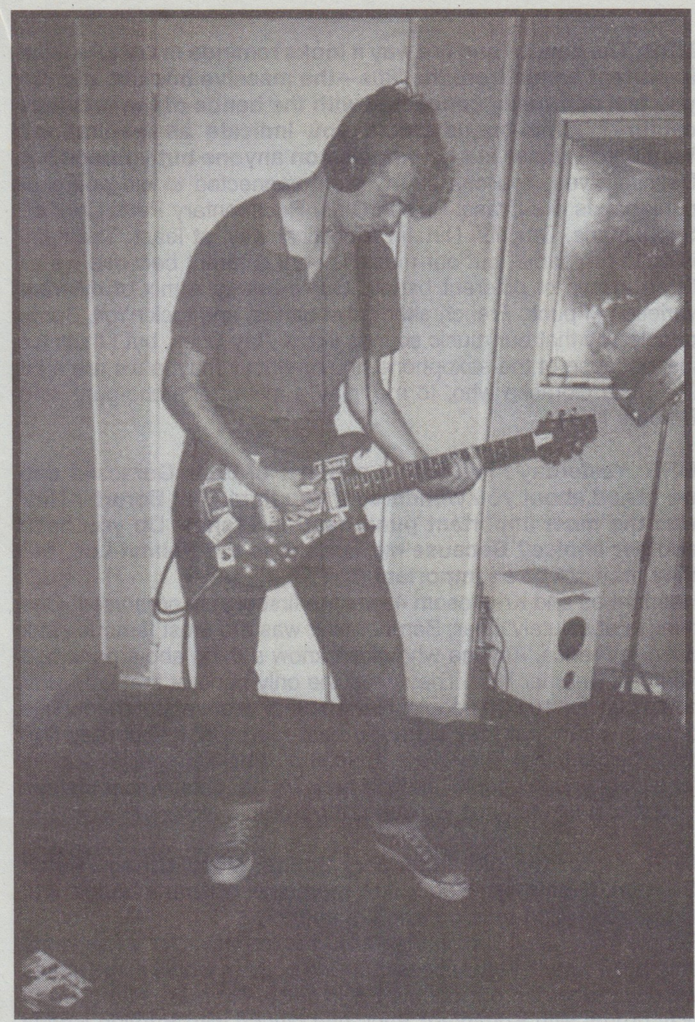


MRR: The band started almost 30 years ago. That was a different era.

Yes, the band began in 1986 with two people. The other members joined the band in 1987. We were about sixteen or seventeen years old. Until May 2014 the band was still made of the same members, except the singer, who now lives in the south of France and is more involved in circus projects. He was replaced by Celine in 2010. In May 2014 we changed our drummer, so now only four members from the pioneer period are still in the band: David on saxophone, Mul on bass, and Looping and Rudy on guitars.

MRR: What was the band like back when it started?

At the very beginning, the band tried to cover English anarcho-punk bands. An awful cover of Crass can still be heard on our website just to show how bad we were...A bit later we mixed our English influences with typical alternative French sounds. Bands like Berurier Noir, Nuclear Device, Haine Brigade, Parkaj Mental, Paria Punk, Lucrate Milk...Haine Brigade, our friends from Lyon, helped us a lot. They managed to get us on stage with Berurier Noir and Dezerter.



MRR: Was it easy to be punk in France? Was it a small group of young people or a more of a movement?
It has never been easy to be a punk in France. France is a very conservative and close-minded country.

And we lived in the countryside! Punk in France never has been a huge movement. It was very confidential except maybe in the beginning of the 1990s when some French alternative bands became more famous, but it didn't last long. Still nowadays most of the English or American bands only play one or two gigs in France when they are on tour and then go to Switzerland or Germany. There are very few squats or places left in France where you can easily set up gigs. Hopefully Dijon is one of them. We founded Maloka in 1988 when we made our first record and it's still active now!

MRR: Tell everyone who is unaware what Maloka is. When was the project? What are some spectacular successes and embarrassing failures? What exactly is part in it?
That's a long story. Back to 1988—we were bored of the punk scene in Dijon, which wasn't political at all. Some people organized gigs for a few years, mostly in bars, but where you couldn't come with a distro. Benefit gigs weren't possible. So we decided to do things by ourselves. Together with two other friends, we founded Maloka in order to release the first Psycho Squatt record and to promote anarcho-punk ideas in France. Our first gigs were wild and complicated, but we began to get an audience and more and more people got involved. In 1991 or 1992 we began to organize gigs in an old military camp that the army had left a few years ago and in some other places throughout town. In October 1997 we began to squat an old factory where we stayed until we got "relocated" in April 2015. Maloka is also a label with about 120 releases out now. We also run a radio show once a week and two years ago we opened an alternative record / book shop in town called Black Market. We used to make a fanzine called *Karnage*, but we stopped it now because we ran out of time.

We are still involved in the organization of some of the gigs, the radio show, and Black Market, even if we've got a little less time the last few years…

We organized so many gigs (over 1,000) and events that it is difficult to say which were a spectacular success and which were failures…The most important thing is that we've met wonderful people and also total cretins during all these years and that it still goes on after all this time…

MRR: I heard something about the history of squats in Dijon. What is it like now? Not only in your city, but overall in France, in the legal system. Is it illegal? Are you still there?
During the last fifteen to twenty years, there have been quite a lot of squats opened in Dijon. Squatting is illegal in France, but the owners have to ask for an eviction by police forces. So, sometimes the owners live far away, or don't care. Sometimes the places belong to the city and it is possible to negotiate things, like we did for the Tanneries, a struggle which lasted for almost eighteen years. Most of the squats didn't last longer than a few months like everywhere, and often many squatters were prosecuted.

MRR: How are your actions, not only musical, received locally? There are a lot of students in Dijon—are young people interested in activity today?
I don't know how things are in Poland but in France, like in England and sometimes in Germany, there are less and less people coming to the shows. As an example, until a few years ago, we could have 200/300 people coming to gigs even on weekdays if good bands were playing and 400 / 500 on weekends. Now we feel pleased

when 150 / 200 people come on a Saturday night! It's even worse when we organize demos or exhibitions...But recently we had some students who help us out with Maloka and some very young people coming back to the shows.

MRR: What bands were around at the time you started? Who was an inspiration and who did you work with?
Like I said before, the band we were really close to was Haine Brigade, but we had friends in many other bands like Ludwig von 88 or Sherwood Pogo. At that time, most French punk bands were more rock'n'roll bands than really punk ones. Bands like Parabellum or les Rats have never really been punk to me even if they have supported the political scene. In our district the best political punk bands were Final Blast, Original Disease, and Désert Culturel. There are now very good punk bands in Dijon but back in the 1980s most bands hated us because we were political.

MRR: How often did you play gigs? Was it just punks at the shows, or a bunch of other freaks? What was the situation with skins?
The situation was very different at that time. There were few gigs organized, few places where you could play, and people weren't afraid to drive 200 kilometers to go to a gig. We didn't play much and most of the time we played benefit gigs. Not only punks came to our gigs. We happened to play in small villages or in some strange venues or situations: we have played in a public library for an exhibition of punk photographs, we have played in a church (which wasn't sacralized anymore, of course), in all sorts of squats; we even played a gig in a park together with Scraps and Brains of Humans in front of the house of the mayor with police everywhere trying to stop the gig.

The situation with skins was sometimes tense but not as it is in some countries. In the late '80s Nazis attacked several of the gigs we organized. As far as I am concerned, for example, they ruined my apartment twice and my car once but we managed to get them out of town and the situation in Dijon is good now. It's not the same in some other parts of France, I'm afraid.

MRR: Where did you play outside of France?
We've played in Spain, Basque Country, Switzerland quite a lot, and Germany. We were supposed to tour Belgium but the tour was cancelled and we were invited to tour in Russia but we couldn't at that moment.

MRR: Pretty soon after starting you released a 7" EP. Where did the idea for the double 7" EP come from? That doesn't happen that often. It was also the first item on Maloka Records...
We wanted to release something original. We wanted to produce our records by ourselves. We always thought that the real strength of punk was DIY and we wanted to help other bands release records, so we created Maloka in 1988.

We didn't have enough money to record a whole LP in studio. One of our friends just came back from Bolivia and we took one of his pictures for the front cover. A friend from Lyon called Poison made the rest of the artwork. 1,200 copies were pressed and it was sold out in ten months time! Due to a good review in *Maximum Rocknroll* we even sent some copies to Chile and Norway. One day we got a phone call from a guy from Alternative Tentacles telling us that Jello Biafra wanted to get a few copies as well!

MRR: I can't understand that a band as great as Psycho Squatt has so little material on vinyl. What happened for all those years and why only recently did a full LP come out?
Well, actually it's because the band split up shortly after recording the double 7" in 1989. We only play together anew since 2010. Back to '89: our singer went away to squat in Lyon and another member (David) had to go to Paris for his studies, so we decided to split up rather than find other members, which would have made little sense to us.

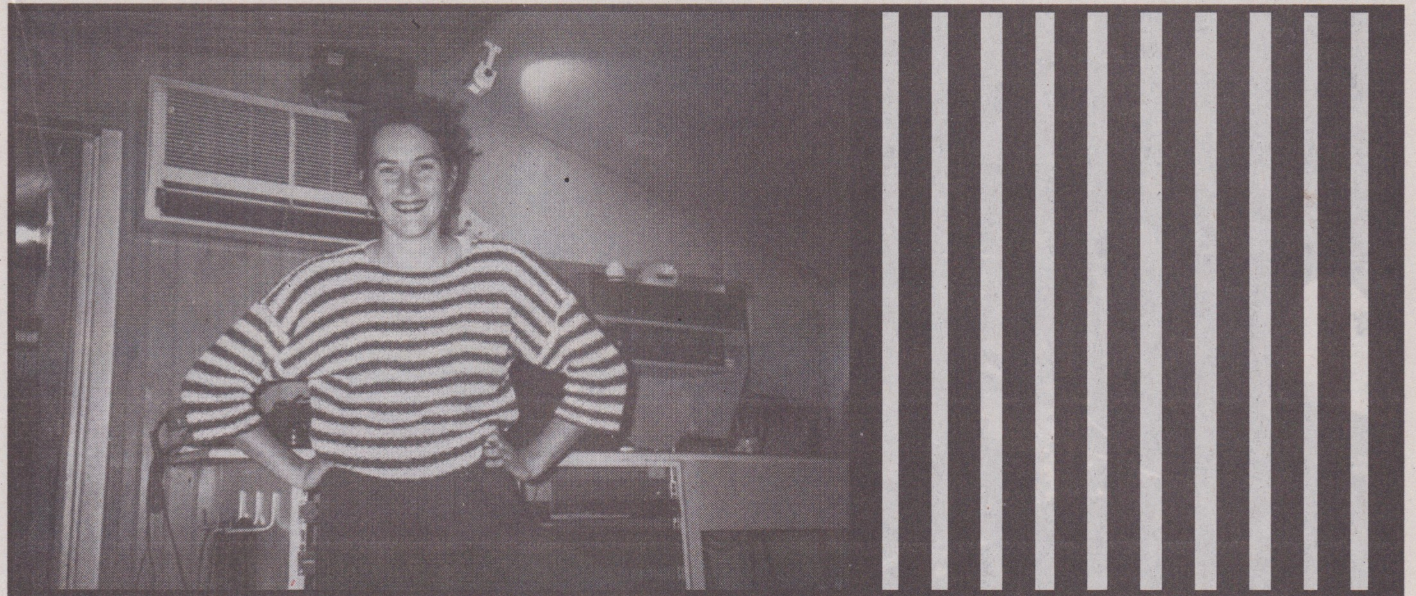
MRR: The new LP and the way it looks reminds me of LPs from important bands from the '80s—the massive booklet, etc. Do you feel spiritually connected with the bands of the previous century? What bands would you indicate as inspiration? Would you rather not be modeled on anyone but yourself?
Definitely yes. You can say we feel connected to old anarcho-punk bands like Crass, Poison Girls, Rudimentary Peni, Conflict, Subhumans, Crucifix, Dirt...in a political way, at least. The spirit is quite the same, but our music is very different because we all listen to lots of different bands. Our music is a mix of different varieties of punk, French alternative bands, and rock'n'roll. Some people say that our music sounds like X-Ray Spex, but I think it's just because of the saxophone. In some way maybe we are a bit like Biala Goraska who, to me, play a mix of anarcho-punk and Bérurier Noir!

MRR: Yesterday I met with a member of Biała Gorączka and we talked about you wondered if you think that Bérurier Noir was the most important punk band in France. Do you have another choice? Because my favorite is the Heimat-Los, but they may not be as important.
Heimat-Los and Kromosom 4 was the first gig we organized! One thing is absolutely clear: Bérurier Noir was the most famous punk band in France. Anyone who didn't know a thing about punk had heard of Bérurier Noir. They were the only band at that time who could play for 10,000 people. Newspapers wrote about them. This doesn't mean that they were the best—far from it. But they had that special thing. They were an icon of rebellion against society for a lot of young people (and still are). My daughter who is sixteen listens to a lot of bands, but mostly to Bérurier Noir.

MRR: As for the old, legendary bands: Métal Urbain, Reich Orgasm, Komintern Sect...Are members of these bands still in the scene? In music or active socially?
People from Métal Urbain tried a kind of "comeback " a few years ago, but it wasn't very successful. One of them works in the studio were we recorded our double EP in 1989. Thomas, who used to play drums with Komintern Sect, has played with Burning Heads since 1991. The others I don't know. These people (I mean Reich Orgasm and Komintern Sect) have never been interesting people to me (except Thomas, who is a good friend) and the others weren't concerned by politics and some of them were not far from being fascists.

MRR: It seems to me that France almost completely missed the wave of bands influenced by Discharge. Is that right?
You are completely right about this. As I said before, French punks weren't very curious and they travelled less than punks from other countries. Most of the bands here played rock'n'roll music that they called it punk. It has always been difficult here to organize gigs for bands playing violent music. You could have 500 people coming to see a ska band or bands like Parabellum and 50 to see Disorder, for example. I remember Toxic Reasons coming for a gig here where 53 people came and it was the day before they played in Switzerland for 1,000 people. In the '90s we often went to see bands in Switzerland or Germany. It became different in the mid '90s. We had few powerful bands in France at that time. Some hardcore stuff such as Loudblast or Hoax were quite famous, but that's all.

MRR: I don't speak French—what do you sing about on the new LP?
On our LP we have tried to write all the songs about all kinds of crisis people have to go through nowadays. So we have songs about mass media or religion manipulating people, violence towards women, the power of money, state and social control, the concept of financial crisis as an excuse to enforce competition between workers, alcohol and drugs taking control of your lives, nerve damage…



MRR: At the end of '80s I heard about the incredible actions organized by SCALP. Can you tell us a little about this organization and what they did? Were they somehow connected with the punk scene?

SCALP groups were some kind of a punk response to fascism in politics and society. There were SCALP groups in every big town acting locally and the different groups met two or three times a year in order to organize national actions, build projects...The type of actions could be antifa demos, trying to get fascist meetings cancelled, attacking boneheads on the streets... In Dijon some friends and I created a SCALP group in 1991 and together with some SCALP members from Paris we managed to get Nazis out of concerts (on the worst moments we had our own bouncers with guns) and later out of town. But the situation was worse in many other towns or countries, I think. It's never been as bad here as it is in eastern Europe, I suppose. Nowadays the antifa groups are not numerous or very active anymore and fascism comes back.

MRR: Are anarchist ideas present in French punk rock? Are vegetarianism and animal rights popular among punks?

Well, after the French alternative movement collapsed in the beginning of the '90s, the punks that were left were really politically invested and active. Real links were created between bands, distros, antifa groups, anarchist collectives, squats, and yes, most of the punks in those years were vegetarians.

I'm afraid it has all changed in the last couple of years. Vegetarianism and animal rights don't seem to be a priority anymore. I guess you could say that it tends to become marginal now.

MRR: Le Pen (French politician who led the National Front party) seemed to be strong in the old days. His ideas somehow seem stronger today! It was partially mentioned before, but could you describe this more broadly?

Le Pen was strong, but for most of the people in that time, he was dangerous. People knew him as a real fascist who claimed to be racist, anti Jew, against homosexuals, etc. People knew he had tortured Arabs during the war between Algeria and France in the 1960s. The people who followed him in that time were very dangerous but they were not numerous. Most of the people were afraid to admit that they voted for him. Today it's completely different. Most of the fascist parties in Europe try (and often manage to) appear as traditional political parties. They claim they are not racist, they get rid of their members who appear violent. That's the reason why Marine Le Pen managed to get her father out. It's another sign to show people that the National Front has changed and that's why so many people can now openly say who they vote for. Of course we all know that the racist ideas are still there. The fact that number two Florian Philippot openly says he's homosexual is a way to attract new people in the party…and it works. People don't want to hear nowadays that the National Front is still a fascist party. That's what makes them so dangerous.

MRR: France used to be called "the eldest daughter of the church." Does the Roman Catholic Church have any influence on the Republic?

All religions have an influence on the Republic. The Roman Catholic Church of course still has an influence on laws that are voted on by the parliament. It is well known that some members of the ministries (especially when Chirac and Sarkozy were president) had links with the Opus Dei. The French republic is based on the separation between church and state, but Nicolas Sarkozy as a President has always tried to give church a bigger place. For example, he has done his best to give more money to the Catholic schools than to the public schools so that the quality of public schools was

slowly ruined. It becomes more and more difficult to get abortions in some places. Justice has always been very smart with anti-abortion commandos…But nowadays all churches definitely have a big influence on society. Due to the pressure of Islam, 98% of the animals that are slaughtered in France are killed following the Halal rites. I guess we could find examples with any religion.

MRR: Europe is faced with a growing influx of immigrants. Not all countries welcome them.
The government, who claims to be socialist, doesn't want to welcome more refugees in France. They are struggling with the Italian government because the Italians say they can't deal with it alone (which is right, of course) and the French say, "They are on your territory so that's your problem, not ours." In fact, the French government has to face the growing power of right-wing ideas in our country. If the government says yes to more refugees, they know that more and more people will get angry and bored and they are afraid of violence towards immigrants and more people voting National Front.

MRR: Rumors in the media indicate that France is almost "ruled" by aggressive teenagers from the suburbs. I know this is from the media, but how do you see this?
No, this is all bullshit. Just the same old story. Media want to sell and so they create fear. Like in every country, there are places you'd better not go take a walk alone, that's it. There are some very dangerous areas in Marseille, near Lyon, and Paris where gangs rule a few streets, but it's not Los Angeles or Mexico. The media has talked a lot about this because our Prime Minister wanted to be very popular and he said he was the one who was going to get rid of drug dealers in our suburbs. So when policemen came by hundreds with television cameras, they were welcomed by the sound of kalashnikov rifles. Actually, it's not that bad, even if I must admit that it's getting more tense and violent on the streets at night.

MRR: At the time Psycho Squatt started playing, we had four radio programs in Poland. Were you better off than that? Were there any underground stations? Anywhere you could hear punk rock?
For sure. One of the best things Mitterand did when he ruled the country in 1981 was to give people a bit more freedom of speech and especially to let people create their own radio programs. In that time you could hear punk music quite often. In Dijon there are plenty of radio programs. It's the same in every big city. In some of them you still have weekly a few hours of punk or anarchist programs. In Paris and Lyon there are radios stations which are only dedicated to alternative music or ideas. Here in Dijon, we have two hours of anarchist radio shows weekly, one hour about squatting and anarchist information, one hour every two weeks about info on prisons, and one hour every two weeks for a Maloka program called *Riot and Dance*.

MRR: Now that we're at the end of the interview, tell me about the nicest thing you've encountered in the punk scene over the years. Something small and personal.
Whoa. Difficult to answer. There have been so many great moments and so much disillusion sometimes. The nicest thing in punk to me was to see Céline playing bass very badly in a shit punk band almost twenty years ago and still being in love and having two lovely daughters today…very personal indeed.

psychosquatt.fr / malokadistro.com

MASSES

While a wave of dark punk washed over the US and Europe a few years ago sparking bands like Spectres and Lost Tribe, Australian equivalent Masses were lost in the isolation of a country where they were an anomaly in the punk scene with this sort of sound, passion, and influence. With political motivations sparked in the unique climate of a government so far from the rest of the world, Masses uses dual vocals with sounds resembling a mix of peace punk like Flux of Pink Indians and the poppy but depressing vibes of New Order to reach a number of different audiences and get their message across. Although a little late to the game of this scene, their sound now seems more progressive than all of them.

They've just dropped their debut LP, Moloch, and are undertaking their first US tour throughout July and August. If you're reading this living in the US, that mightn't seem much of a feat, but travelling from Australia (fourteen hours by plane across the Pacific) is one serious trip. So if they're passing through your city, go check them out; they won't disappoint.

Interview and introduction by Christina P.
Photos and art provided by the band.

MRR: What got Masses started initially? How did it all begin? And what hole do you feel you're filling in Melbourne's punk scene?

James: I started Masses with my mate Ryan. We had another band going at the time but we wanted to do something more influenced by early '80s UK anarcho punk. After a few jams we recorded a rough demo, which we never released. We weren't happy with the sound or that it sounded too similar to the early Flux of Pink Indians and Rudimentary Peni stuff. Shortly after, our first synth player Christi and Tessa joined. I think we finally found a direction we were all happy with in our demo, and then the *Horde Mentality* EP.

Tessa: I'd known Ryan, the original drummer, for years back when he used to be a spikey chaos punk. He'd told me he'd started an anarcho two-piece type thing with James, who I didn't know, but thought maybe they were going to move in more of a gothy post-punk direction with it… I kinda insisted they needed a bass player and well…here we are.

Unlike in the States and to a lesser extent Europe, the whole goth revival dark punk trend never quite made it to Australia. We're about five years behind most of the time. Australia seems to only just be getting over powerviolence. There are really only a handful of bands in Australia with an anarcho or gothy/post-punk oriented sound, and they all seem to be from outside of Melbourne. I don't know if we're filling a hole, but because of our relatively unique position (for Australia) being somewhere between punk and post-punk/goth, we're able to play heaps of varied shows and drift between scenes a lot. I don't think there's heaps of bands that do that, at least in the wider punk scene in Melbourne. James and I grew up in and are still very much a part of the more political and hardcore/crusty scene and so we do play a lot of shows at venues that more go along with that: squats, park shows, more activist benefits, etc, although very often we are the odd band out musically on those lineups. On the other hand we play heaps of shows to the more bar oriented scene, even a few "indie rock" kinda shows. So it's nice I guess not being constricted to always playing the same shows with the same type of bands, even though the style we play isn't as wildly popular in Australia as it is elsewhere.

MRR: Over the few years Masses has been a band, the lineup has been through some changes but as a whole has persevered. Who is in the band currently?

Tessa: Without going through the long spiel of lineup changes, we've had a few. Masses has persevered through everything from deportations to broken limbs, but mostly our ex-band member count is so high because we've been so lucky to have so many awesome friends play fill in on tours and shows when original band members couldn't make it for whatever period of time.

Our current lineup is the most consistent since Masses formed sometime in 2013. James who started the band plays guitar and sings, and he's also the primary writer. I've also been in from the start and play bass. Nellie joined on synth and vocals when our previous synth player and vocalist Jen had to very suddenly leave the country. That was about two years ago? Nellie joining changed the band musically quite a bit; she's a very accomplished singer and has added a lot more dual vocals and melody to the songwriting that's more prevalent on the new LP. And Ashleigh our current drummer joined just over a year ago. Nearly all of us have lived together at some point and we're all best friends. It may sound cheesy but it feels pretty damn good to be in a band where everyone and everything is just *chill*. Although with such comfort comes a level of flatulence in band practice I don't think James was ready for. The girls of Masses are all for breaking down farting gender stereotypes.

MRR: As one of the original members, would you say the current dynamics of Masses brings about a sound you originally envisioned for the band?

Tessa: The dynamics, at least in songwriting, have changed quite a lot. When the band started, it started as a two-piece. James and Ryan the original drummer wrote everything together and it's where all the demo and 7" songs came from, which we still play a lot of today. In the period before Ashleigh joined we hit so many snags, creatively and logistically. We were going through so many line-up changes, touring overseas, and had so many setbacks with getting the split tracks we had out. They were initially for a 7" split with the US band Crimson Scarlet. After over a year of waiting we gave up on waiting for that and then were going to release it as a split with Lost Tribe. Just as that started getting off the ground Lost Tribe broke up and eventually it came out as a split with new Australian dark punk band Death Church.

After that period of stagnation we finally got to the more stable line-up we have now. Nellie really came out of her shell and has brought a whole new angle of songwriting to the music. Personally I think Nellie brings a bit more New Wave, like an early New Order vibe, with her vocal hooks and synth lines than the more straight up goth and anarcho stuff from earlier releases. In saying that, James still writes so much, so we still stay quite true to our original style. The new LP is a big mix of goth, anarcho, post-punk, and New Wave. I think the best description I've heard of our current sound was "anarcho and New Wave's shitty divorce proceedings."

MRR: How have your influences and direction changed over time? Where did they begin, what did they become?

James: I mentioned before that the band was formed mostly by a mutual love of bands like Flux of Pink Indians and Rudimentary Peni, but with the LP there was a lot more creative input from the whole band. I think that I still write songs influenced by early UK anarcho, but Nellie, Ashleigh, and Tessa all have heaps of different influences that I am not 100% familiar with. I think our style now is pretty varied and hard for me to pinpoint influences, sounding at times like Cocteau Twins and a minute later something more like Chumbawamba's really early stuff.

MRR: Do you feel bands focusing on Australian politics is rare in the Australian punk scene you're involved in? What are your thoughts on the current climate there?

Tessa: Whilst I realize the entire world's political balance is leaning right at the moment, Australia sits in a relatively unique political position that I think isn't shared so much by other countries of similar means. The incredibly progressive welfare, education, and human rights legacies from the Whitlam era are being dismantled, and we're on a fast track to becoming little USA. Islamophobia and violent anti-asylum seekers and anti-migrant sentiment are at an all-time high. Although this may sound like a similar tune to the rest of the world, asylum seekers are self-immolating themselves inside hidden offshore government concentration camps while Indigenous remote communities are forcibly removed because the government can't be bothered spending any more money providing them water.

James: I spent a few months years back working with asylum seekers in remote detention camps and it was one of the most harrowing experiences of my life. Most of them were victims of a war they have nothing to do with. They fled their homes to escape persecution because of either their ethnicity or religious beliefs only to find themselves separated from their families and incarcerated indefinitely without having committed a crime in their life. Just recently two young men in detention committed suicide by self-immolation. Roughly half the country is either indifferent or approves of the detention, which is further supported by both major parties in our government. My thoughts on the political climate here are always toing and froing between a drive to fight the conservative agenda and a nihilistic disgust for the apathetic slobs that couldn't give a toss.

Tessa: Sure there are protests, but never anything even comparable to the organization or ferocity seen elsewhere. This I think can be squarely attributed to a comfortable and apathetic country. We've never been invaded and we've never experienced revolution. Radical or even protest politics are not in our country's culture and things aren't being kept in check.

As far as the Australian punk scene goes, there is definitely a very strong political awareness in a lot of bands in the DIY punk scene, from pretty crusty bands like Extinct Exist, Tactical Attack, and Dispossessed, to less hardcore bands like Infinite Void and Grey Places. As there is in Australia in general, there will always be a majority of indifferent and party-pig bands that either don't care, skirt the issues, or are just straight up pieces of shit. I'm lucky we kinda exist in a bubble filled with proactive groups and some amazing women and gender non-conforming people, however this is most certainly not always the case at all in the punk scene in Melbourne or Australia.

MRR: How do you feel the Melbourne scene is going? Who do Masses usually play with? Props to any venues or bands or people putting on shows etc?

Tessa: Like I said earlier, we're kinda drifters. We play a lot of different shows with different crowds but the biggest props of recent times has to go to the Hotshots Warehouse crew. James used to live at the main all-ages and DIY punk venue in Melbourne, Black Goat, and sadly after that closed down awhile back there was a bit of a void left in Melbourne for non-bar venues. Hotshots is a huge and amazing squatted pool hall that would rival any of the mega-squat venues in Europe. It's collective run and definitely the best shows of this year have been at that place. It's so crucial and such a relief to have the monotony of expensive bar shows broken up by such a sick new space. We've played a lot recently with Tol, a newish band that came from the ashes of Tax and is made up of the same members of Lakes on different instruments. Amebix meets goth. They have a new 7" out on No Patience Records—definitely

check it out! We always play with the Scab Eater boys when they're in the country. They play weird stompy sewer hardcore.

MRR: What does *Moloch* mean and how does it represent the sound on the album? How did the release with Mass Media come about?
Tessa: Nellie came up with the name *Moloch*. She said she initially got the name from a scene in the old black and white silent film *Metropolis*. Moloch appears in a scene where within a factory a machine overheats after an exhausted worker collapses and many more workers are injured. As the machine overheats it turns into a giant god-like mouth that eats all the workers. Our use of it as symbolism isn't the most subtle, but hey, not much anarcho is.

We got in touch with Tricia from Mass Media while organizing a split 7" record with Lost Tribe from Richmond, Virginia. After Lost Tribe broke up and the split was canceled we immediately organized to move on to an LP. Tricia has been so supportive and helpful; it's been really awesome doing a split release with another label run by a woman.

MRR: You run a distro that's putting the release out as a split. Have you put anything else out? When you started the distro was it your intention for it to turn into a label and support Masse?
Tessa: James & I started the *Lost In Fog* distro together just over a year ago because it was damn near impossible to get records we liked, especially post-punk and goth type stuff from abroad, in Australia. We had been ordering bulk copies of a few releases from bands like Spectres and Funeral Parade and distributing them amongst our friends who like similar stuff to save on postage. After doing this a few times we thought we might as well formalize the process, so we started taking a box of records to shows and popped some stuff online. The name came form our friend Lee from Tol, who likened James's vocals in Masses to a whale being lost in a fog. Shit, maybe I wasn't supposed to say that out loud! Sorry, James.

After almost two years of this split 7" debacle, as mentioned above, I was sick to death of the split and just wanted to get it out, so I self-released it with not much more foresight than that. I didn't really think about creating a label out of the distro, but soon after I discovered an amazing goth band from Indonesia called Eerie and I really wanted to get their stuff out to an audience outside of Southeast Asia. And it kind of just went on from there. I plan to keep my focus of the Lost in Fog label on the Asia Pacific region, releasing Australian bands but also Southeast Asian and Aotearoa (New Zealand) bands, which are criminally underrepresented outside of the region, even though they produce some of the best bands in the world. As well as the new Masses LP I also released an Australian tour tape for the Singaporean band Lubricant, who I recently toured around Australia with in April/May.

MRR: What's going on with the US tour? Where can people see you?
Tessa: So we're touring the US & Canada throughout July and a bit of August, starting on the West Coast then looping through the Midwest and East Coast. We'll be doing the east coast leg of the tour with Pawns from New York City, which I am so excited about! We're ending the tour in San Antonio for San La Muerte festival, which has literally the best dark punk lineup that has ever existed; I am so excited to play with so many amazing bands. There's a Facebook page with all the dates, or you can check out the Mass Media or Lost in Fog websites.

lostinfogau.blogspot.com.au
massesmelbourne.bandcamp.com

NORTH AMERICAN TOUR 2016

JULY & AUGUST

* SHOWS WITH

PAWNS

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7/10 SEATTLE
7/11 OLMYPIA
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7/15 OAKLAND
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7/18 LA
7/19 LA
7/20 MERCED
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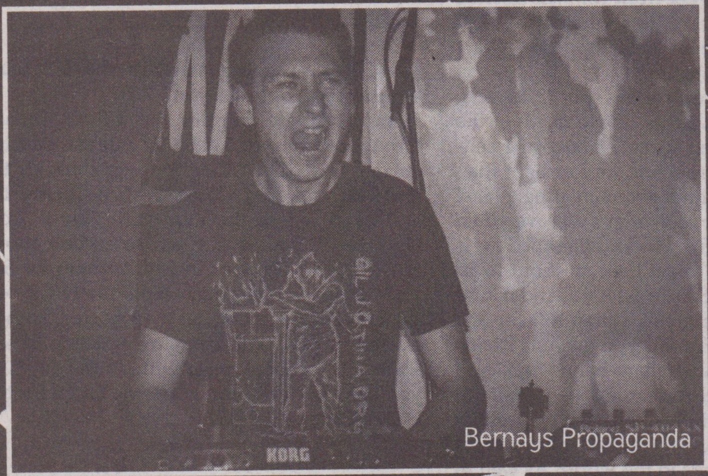

Bernays Propaganda

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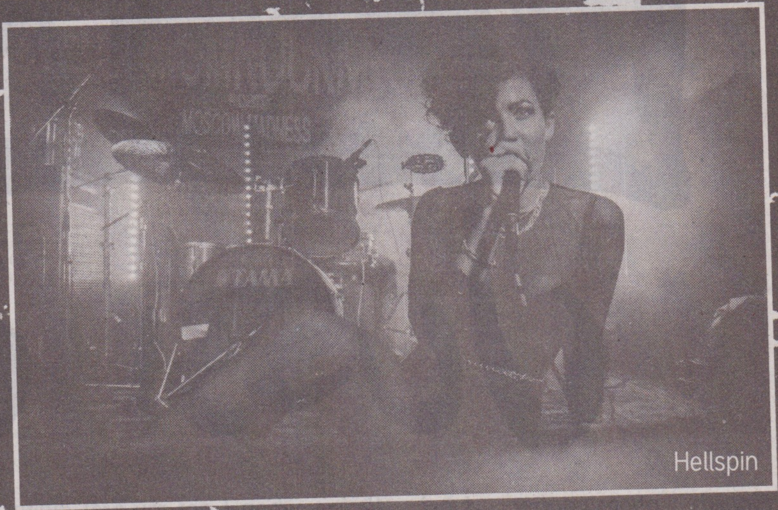


Hellspin

Hellspin

Jussi Janis

Finnish photographer Jussi Jänis discussed his process, recent photobook, and inspirations with Markku Hirvelä.

MRR: When did you start taking photos? How about photos of bands?
I got a camera for a Christmas present from my dad when I was nine. It was a pocket camera, but had portable flash, so it wasn't total garbage and I actually took some decent photos with it over the years before getting a better camera.

I took my first photos of bands when I was eighteen. I started going to shows a bit earlier, but unfortunately didn't bring a camera with me until I had turned eighteen. Back then it was a whole different thing to take photos if you compare it to recent years. Film and printing seemed expensive, so you didn't carry your camera around that easily and you took far less photos. I started shooting shows more frequently in 2005 when I got my first digital camera, but there are a whole bunch of show photos from the '90s and '00s in my closet.

MRR: How much time do you spend taking pictures? At every show you go to? What makes a show good for you? Can any show look good in a picture? Is it up to the photographer or audience or band to make an excellent photo?
I don't bring my camera to shows that often anymore. I guess I got a bit tired of taking photos at shows after this book project. I still take photos at shows every now and then, but not nearly as much as I used to. There was a time I brought my camera with me to practically every show I went. I photographed shows a lot in the years 2008–2012, but not so much after that. I still like taking photos at shows though, but I guess I'm taking a little break from doing it, that's all.

There are different kinds of good shows. If a band is good and tight (or sloppy, if that's the thing there), the audience is alive and the general vibe is nice, then it's a good chance the show is going to be good. The conditions of the show are of course crucial for chances to take powerful photos. If there's a lot of participation from the audience then it can be easier to make the photos look nice. Same goes for a show where the band is ripping it up on stage, moving around, and looking exciting. You can take decent photos of less eventful shows too, but it can be more difficult, especially if the band doesn't move at all or the lights are very low at the place or the stage too high. Sometimes the show is just boring or the vibe just isn't there or the band sucks, then you don't even have the urge to take photos.

Every show and every venue differs from another, so it's always a challenge to take photos at shows. I don't think there's necessarily a recipe for taking

a great photo—sometimes it's just pure luck. But taking a lot of photos and using a decent camera (portable flash is a must!) surely helps. If you want to take good photos, don't bother with those cell phones or pocket cameras, please! It's also important to be at a good position to take photos (usually near the stage), but personally I'm a bit shy, so it's not always so pleasant to be up front. I know some photographers like to be all over the place and even get on the stage, but to me that's just annoying.

MRR: What's your favorite picture you've taken?

Oh man, that's a difficult one! I have plenty of favorites for different reasons. I can't really pick one, but one of my favorite show photos I've taken is a photo of Maho Neitsyt taken in 2008 at Domino club in Helsinki. Maho Neitsyt is of course *the* classic Finnish drunk punk band and in the picture there's Ile from Kuolema (another notorious drunk punk band) offering a beer to Pexi, the infamous singer of Maho Neitsyt. That photo is also the one many people seem to like. The photo itself is technically far from great, but it captures a special moment in time.

MRR: Did you study or are you self-taught? Digital or film?

I'm mainly self-taught. I have taken a couple of photography classes, but otherwise I have learned to take photos through shooting a ton of them. Even though I have learned a thing or two from those classes I think the far best way to learn to take better photos is just shooting a lot of them; that way you will eventually get better at it. For me, the move from film to digital photography was clearly a turning point. It was just easier (not to mention cheaper!) to learn the craft when you could take far more photos and instantly see what your photos looked like.

Nowadays I shoot only digital, but I still have a film camera and I wouldn't be surprised if I started taking more photos with it since I still love how pictures shot with a film camera look. I would imagine I'd be a bit better with a film camera since I have taken a large amount of pictures since I used a film camera, so I must have somewhat better skills with a film camera too. I guess I have to find out one of these days.

Hävitys

Lama

Maailmanloppu

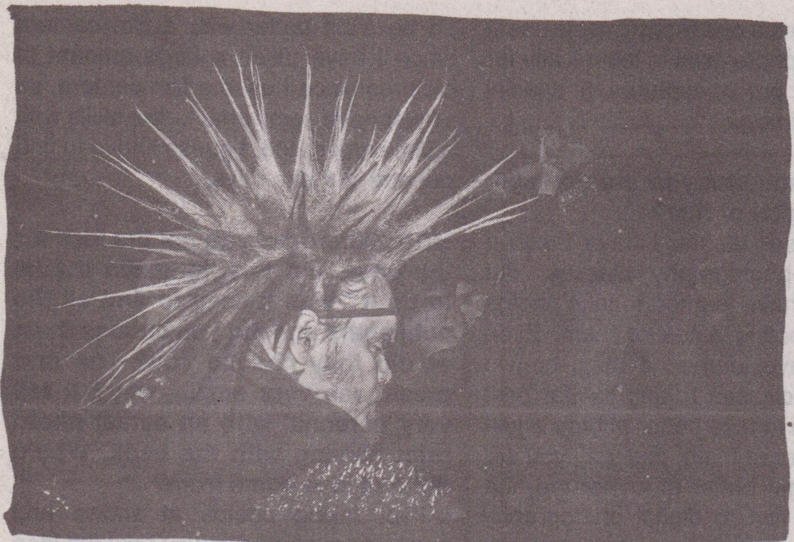
MRR: Where did you get the idea for the book and how long did it take to do it? Was it easy to find all the publishers and did you choose them or did they choose you? The first press was very small—why? It felt very personal with an actual photo print coming with the book. Where did that idea come from?

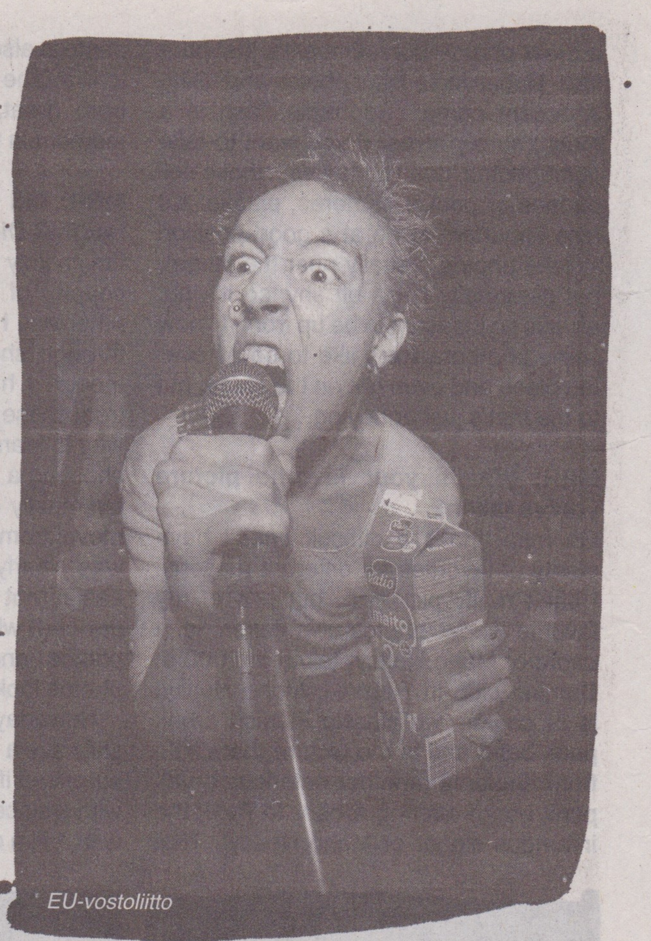
I kept taking photos at shows and somewhere along the way I got the idea of doing a photo zine of my pictures. Then after awhile I started dreaming of doing a proper book and I couldn't get that idea out of my head, so eventually I started asking labels and friends if there would be interest in co-releasing this book. Then I asked how much it would cost to print it. The price wasn't as much as I had feared, so now I had more confidence that I could pull this off.

Finding the labels was actually pretty easy. I asked just about all the Finnish punk labels I could think of (well, not all of them, but the ones I thought might be up for it) and there was enough interest and money that I could keep this project moving forward. Two of the labels drew back from the project along the way, but that didn't really matter; I still had enough money to make the book.

I stopped shooting photos for the book in the last day of 2012 and after that I started figuring out how to make the book. That included a lot of selecting of photos, conducting and translating interviews, getting to know how to use Photoshop a little better, and also learning to use InDesign, which was the first layout program I had ever used! I had to pretty much start from scratch because I knew next to nothing about making a book. Yes, I had made a bunch of zines before, but this was way different and more complicated of a thing. I got valuable help in using InDesign and Photoshop from a couple of friends, including Janne Mäki-Turja from *Mutiny* zine. Thanks again for the patience and tips!

The first pressing was 400 copies, which did prove to be too small an amount. I had no idea the book would





EU-vostoliitto

sell so fast. I mean the first pressing was sold out in two weeks! That's pretty crazy. I really didn't know how many copies it would be reasonable to press plus I just didn't have money for a much bigger press anyway. The second pressing was 300 copies. I hope to get more books sold abroad from this second pressing, since the book is in English and all.

I think the idea of including a real black and white photo with every book just popped into my head one day and it seemed like a good idea. Let me tell you, it wasn't all that fun to tape all those photos to those 400 books!

MRR: How many pictures have you taken? How much stuff do you have in the vaults? And is there a chance for a sequel to your book?

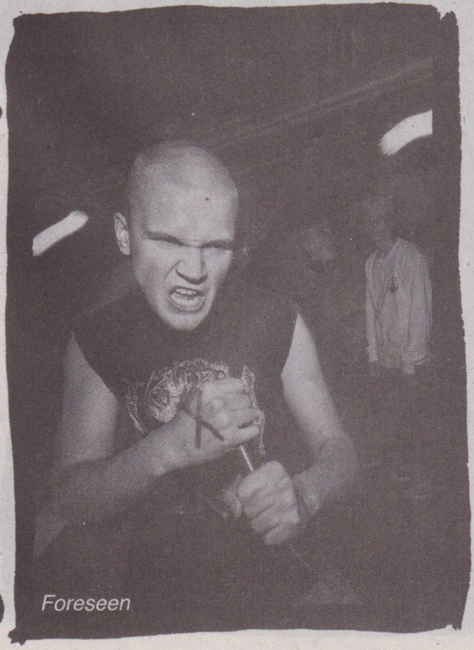
I have absolutely zero ideas of how many photos I've taken. Thousands, thousands, thousands. Still, I'm not a photographer who takes a million photos of everything. I'm more of a type who wants to get it right the first time and takes a modest amount of photos. I think it comes from my background of starting out with a film camera. Yeah, I have lots of photos in the vaults, but I've also put a lot of my photos on Facebook and on Punk In Finland message board and sent a ton of photos to the bands I've shot. There are a lot of photos people haven't seen, but I think most of the better photos have been put on somewhere for people to see.

I doubt there will be part two because as I said I haven't shot nearly as many photos at shows recently and I'd like to maybe rather do something else than make some sort of sequel to this book. I've been thinking of doing another zine, that might be fun for a change. I haven't done one in five years or so. I'm sure that would include some photos too, but of course not in this scale.

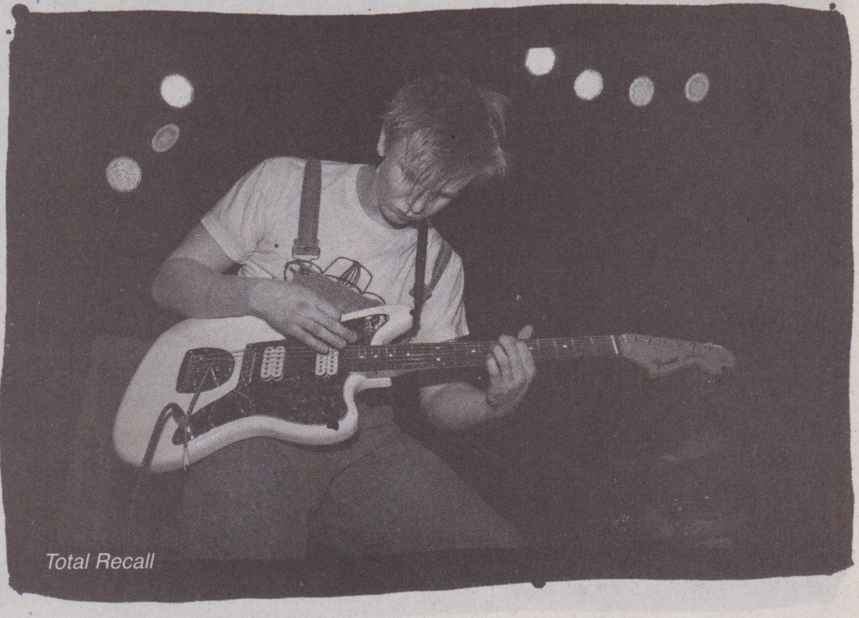
MRR: Who's your favorite photographer and why? Your favorite punk photo book?

I really like looking at good photos and there are tons and tons of great photographers. I guess I like some of the most famous ones, like Diane Arbus, Man Ray, Henri Cartier-Bresson, and people like that...Finland has had many great photographers like Pentti Sammallahti, Stefan Bremer, Hannes Heikura, and Esko Männikkö. Of course there are so many photographers who take photos that please my eye or make me think. The world is filled with photos, so photos are a huge part of our everyday culture, like it or not. I think overall that good photos do emerge from all the mediocre photos that are around. Many of my favorite photographers take photos that are somehow inspiring and emotional as well as just fun and exciting to look at. I guess good photos often have some kind of strong feeling about them, they just stop you in your tracks. Also they can be anything from simply aesthetically beautiful to something annoying but powerful.

As for punk photo books, there are a bunch of amazing books...*Banned in DC* is my all-time favorite. I got it over twenty years ago, but I still get a great thrill browsing through it. Glen E. Friedman's books are of course great and forever inspirational. Ed Colver's *Blight at the End of the Funnel* is excellent. The three-dimensional *Loud 3D* (from 1984) is no doubt the craziest photo book I have! Besides photo books there are some great punk photo zines, like *My Rules* by Glen E. Friedman, *If Life is a Bowl of Cherries What Am I Doing in the Pit?* by Murray Bowles, and two issues of *Zone 5* zine. Great stuff! Some of the other punk/hardcore photographers I enjoy include Naomi Petersen, Frank Gargani, Justine DeMetrick, and JP Inkinen from Finland. By the way, could someone hook me up with the photo book *Get Shot* by Martin Sorrondeguy?



Foreseen



Total Recall

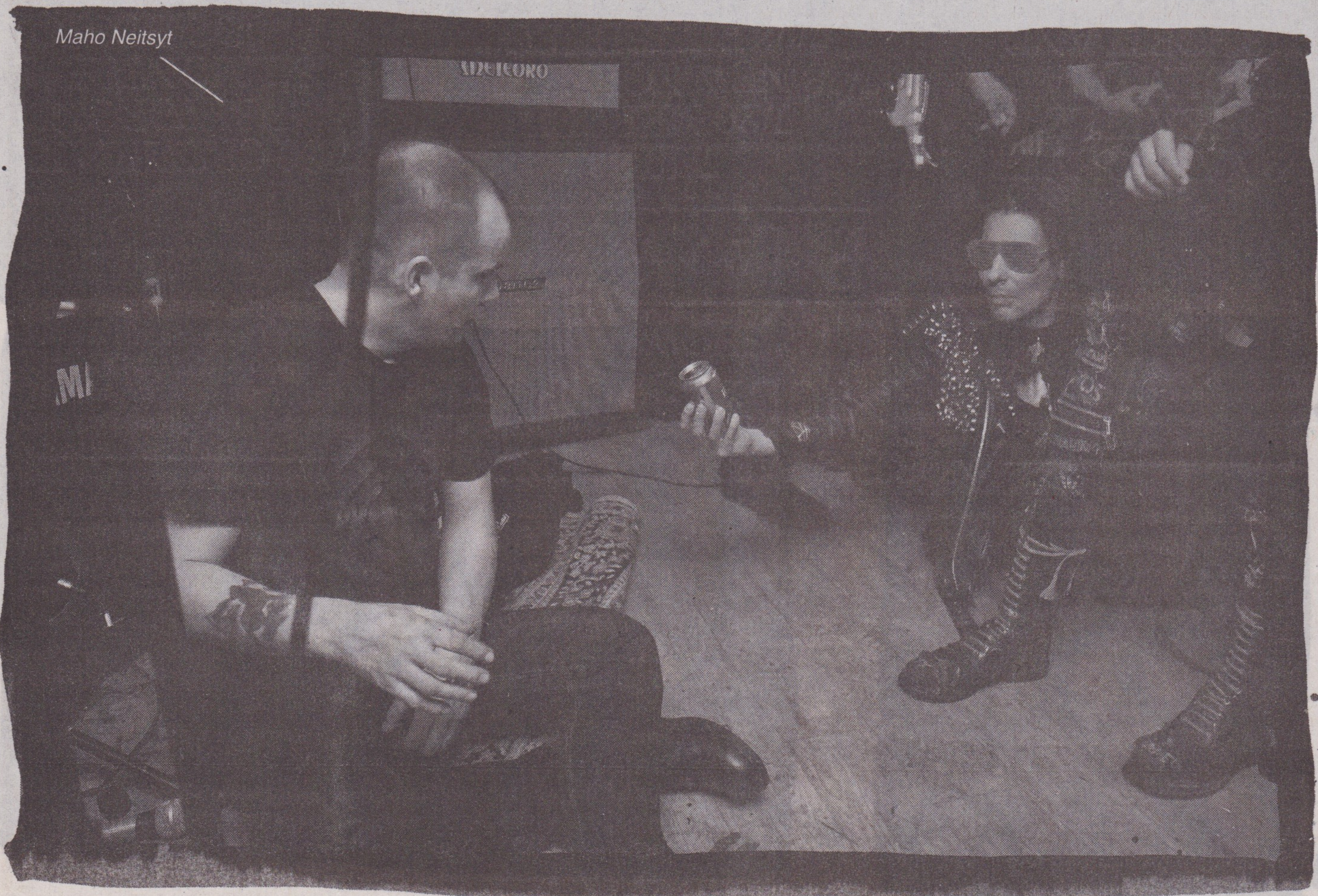
MRR: You did vocals in some bands like the Stakeout. Why did you stop? Do you still have an urge for doing that or are you in a band currently?
Yeah, I've been singing for a few hardcore punk bands, most notably the Stakeout and Urban Unrest. The Stakeout was around from 2000-2004 and we did a bunch of records including an LP for Deranged Records and played maybe fifty shows, including one European tour. It was a lot of fun and I think the band was good too. I have fond memories of that time. Urban Unrest formed a few years after the Stakeout broke up. We did a couple of 7"s, a split LP with Parental Shock, and played maybe a little over fifty shows. I got a little frustrated with that band (for a number of reasons) and left the band in 2011.

After that there have been a couple of efforts to get a band going, but they haven't gone anywhere after a few band practices. Now there's another band forming, I guess we'll have to wait and see if something comes out of that or not...It should be fast, crude hardcore, that's all I can say about it at this point. I guess the urge is still there, sometimes it gets stronger and sometimes I swear I'll never be in a band again.

Jussi's photo book is available from him.
Write to juteja@hotmail.com for information on how to order it.

Moderni Elämä

Armless Children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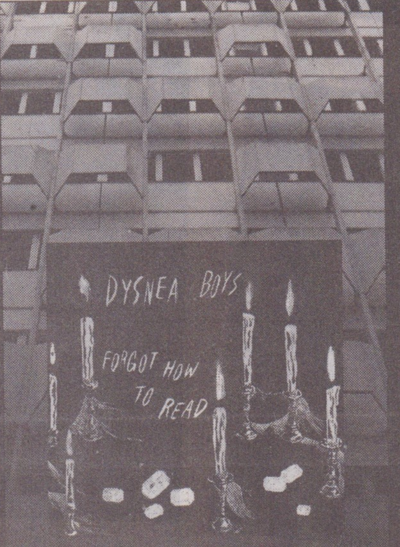

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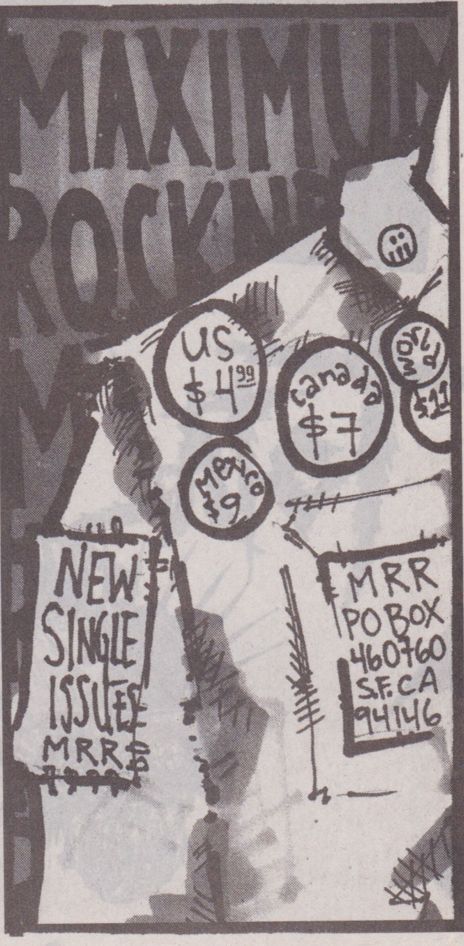

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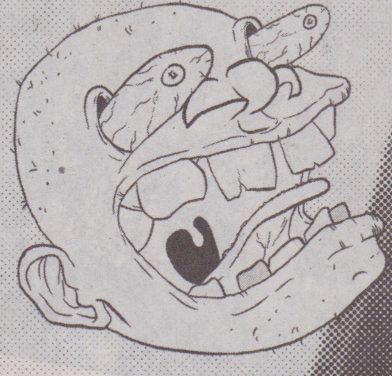

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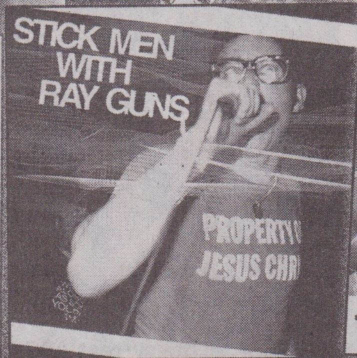

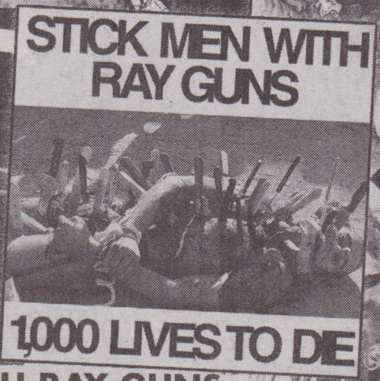

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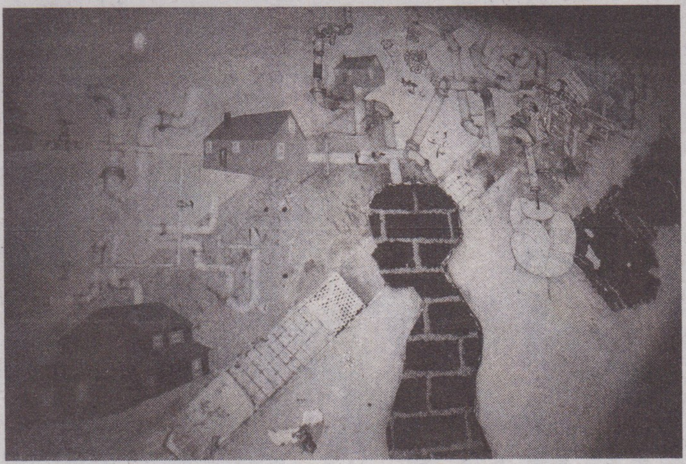
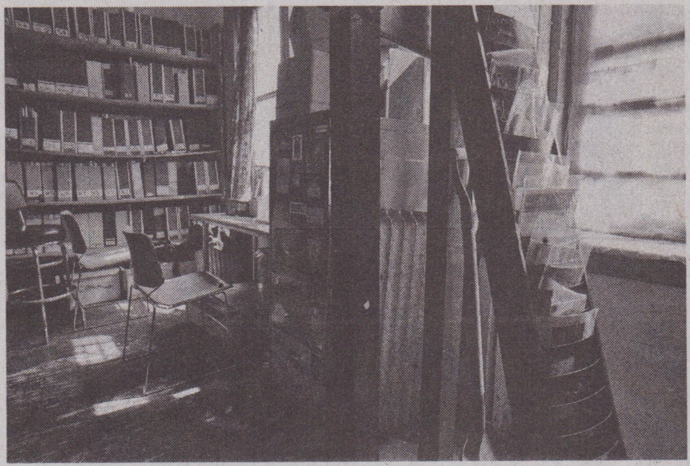

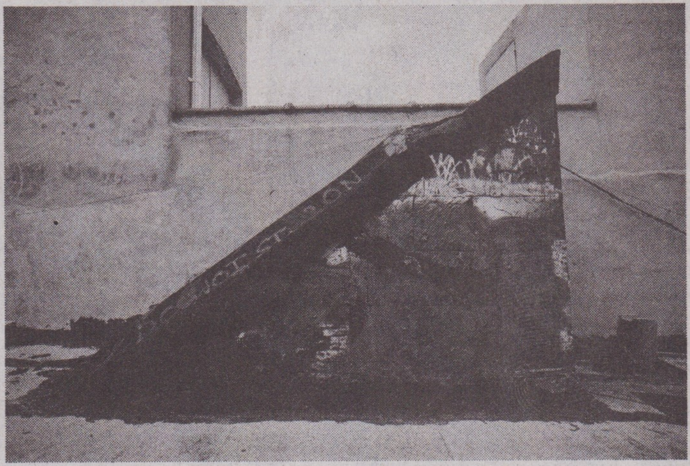

In the waning days of the 1980s, ABC No Rio—a squatted tenement building in New York City's Lower East Side that housed a radical art space—first opened its doors to the disaffected corners of New York City's punk and hardcore scene. For years, the scene had revolved around CBGB's infamous Sunday matinee hardcore shows, which by the late 1980s had devolved into weekly displays that troubled the nascent ABC hardcore collective: anti-political bands, tolerance of corporate metal, and most troublingly of all, wanton violence. For many, the scene had grown far too macho, suburban, and out-of-control. The punks who started the Saturday matinees at No Rio were looking for a meaningful alternative to the CBGBs scene, so when they discovered No Rio they began to book bands from previously unsung corners of the NYC scene—Born Against, Rorschach, Go!, Citizens Arrest, Bugout Society, Huasipungo, etc.—and avowed that No Rio shows would always be all ages, non-corporate, and would never welcome racist, sexist, or homophobic bands.

In the subsequent 27 years, No Rio has gone through zillions of changes in the makeup of its punk collective—some amicable, some less so—and booked untold hundreds of gigs by punk and hardcore bands from all over the world. (My personal favorite gigs at ABC include Los Crudos in 1998, Tragedy in 2002, DSB in 2003, and a rare weeknight gig by Rattus in 2004.) In that time, the Lower East Side has transformed from an economically distressed and disregarded neighborhood with an active squatter counterculture into a boutique- and condo-lined playpen for the wealthy. Still, through these transformations, and through several ups and downs with an often unsympathetic city government, ABC No Rio—unlikely home-away-from-home for many NYC punks through the years—has maintained its schedule of Saturday matinees, booked by the same ideals that guided that first collective. Now, ABC No Rio is on the eve of the last ever Saturday punk matinee at its current building. By the time you read this essay the old tenement will likely have been razed and a new look ABC No Rio will be under construction, attempting to stave off the suffocating forces of gentrification that have so utterly changed the surrounding landscape. ABC No Rio is dead, long live ABC No Rio.

—Golnar Nikpour

The photos included here are currently on view in one of the final art shows at the current ABC No Rio building, "The Past Will Be Present." They document the building as it was before demolition. Saturday matinees will continue through construction at the Silent Barn and Aviv in Brooklyn. Thanks to ABC No Rio Director Steven Englander for his assistance with this feature. All photos copyright of the photographers.

The collective has raised millions of dollars towards the cost of their new building. If you share the same spirit of opposition, consider making a donation to help them fully fund it. More information at abcnorio.org.

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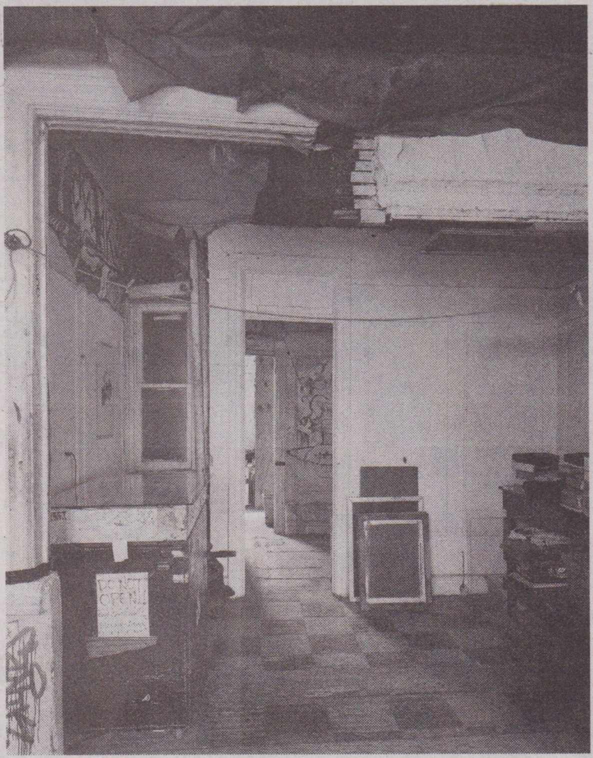
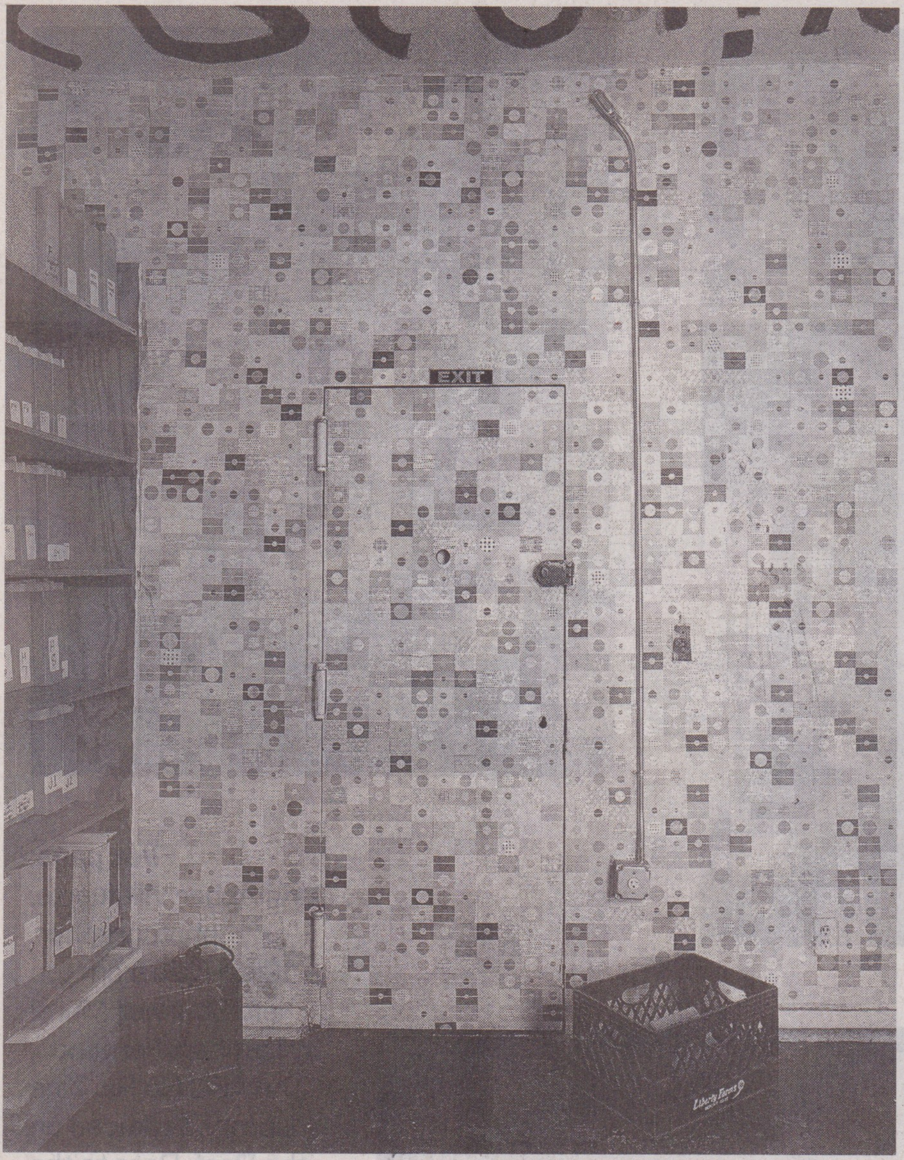


First page:
Christopher Villafuerte, photographer. Clockwise from top left: Stairwell Mural by Lambert Fernando, The ABC No Rio Zine Library, Bulkhead on the Roof, Door to the Booking Office

Opposite Page:
Jade Doskow, The ABC No Rio Bathroom

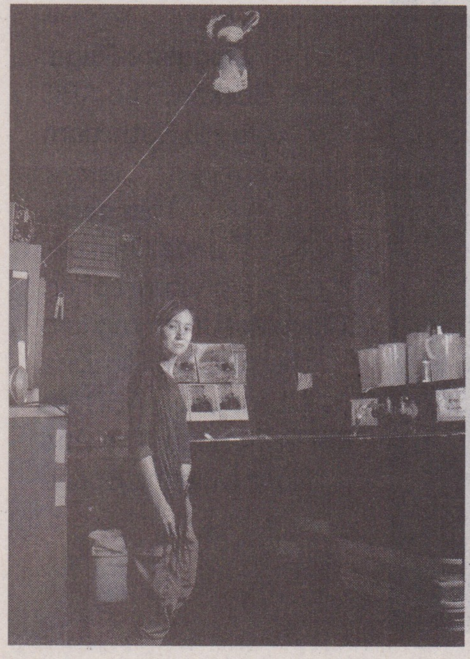
This page:
Jade Doskow, photographer. Clockwise from top left: The ABC No Rio Zine Library, The ABC No Rio Print Shop, The 2nd Floor Meeting Space

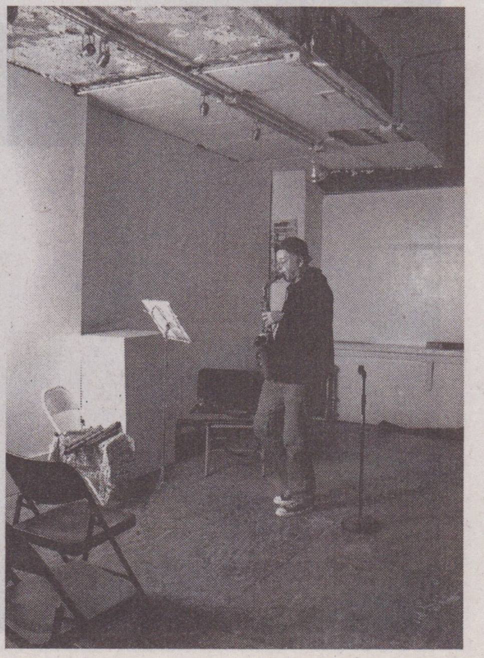


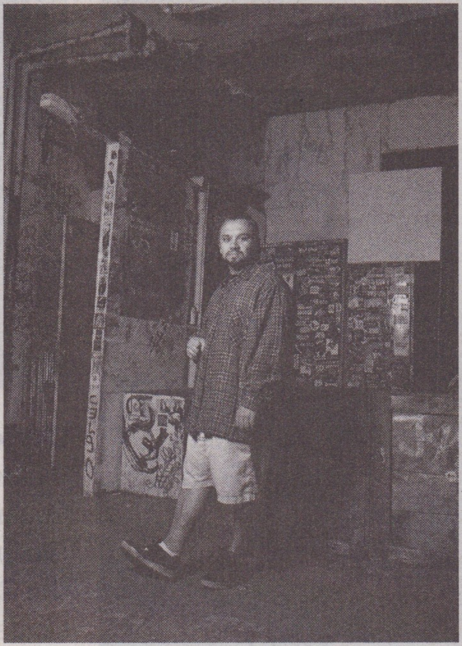
This page and facing:
Jade Doskow, ABC No Rio Zine Library, ABC No Rio Print Shop

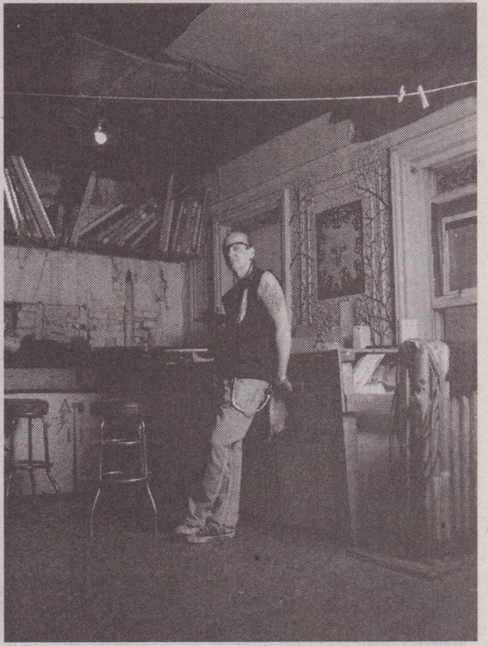
The below portraits of ABC No Rio volunteers were taken by Margarida Correia as part of Erin Sickler's "Hanging Out at No Rio" project in the summer of 2010.

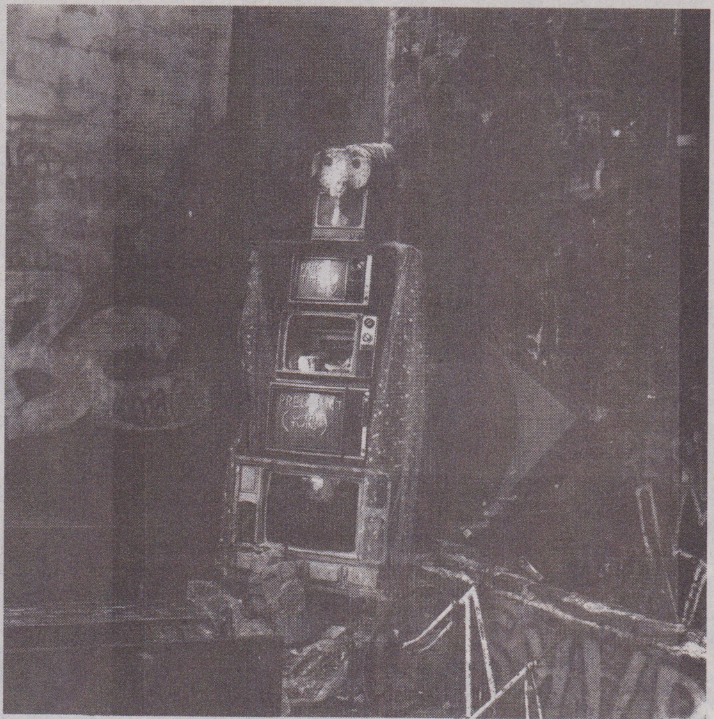
From left: Victoria Law, the ABC No Rio Darkroom; Mike Estabrook + Vandana Jain, the Visual Arts Collective; Blaise Siwula, curator, at ABC No Rio's experimental and improv series, COMA; Jack Bratich, the ABC No Rio Zine Library; Esneider Arevalo, the Saturday Matinee; Garry Boake, the ABC No Rio Printshop.

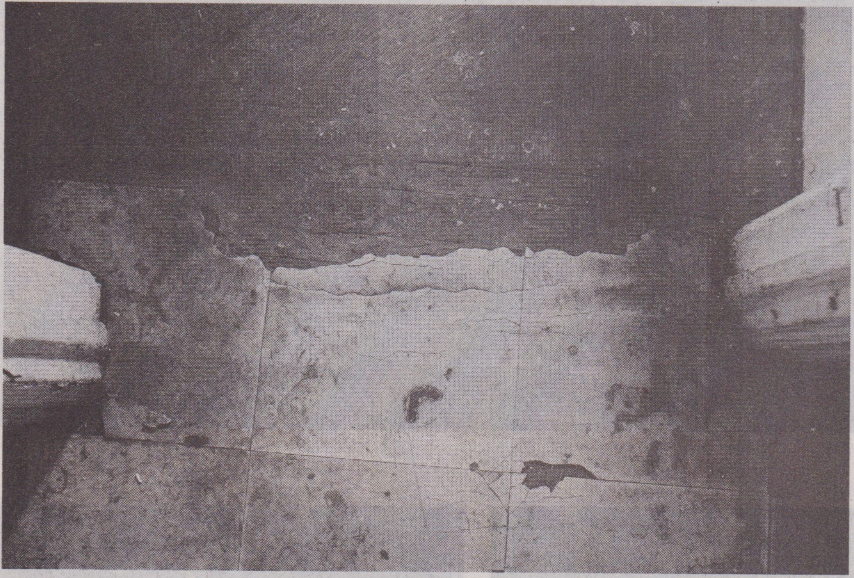


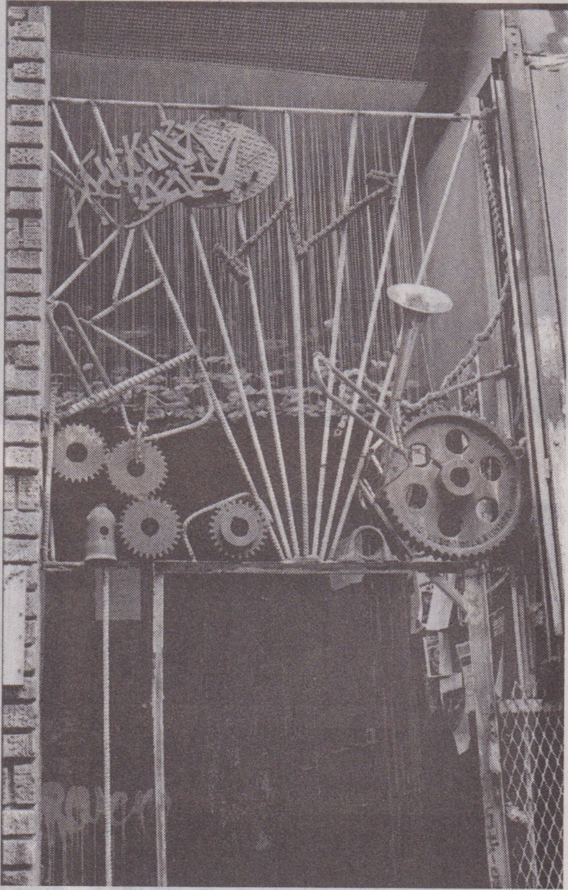




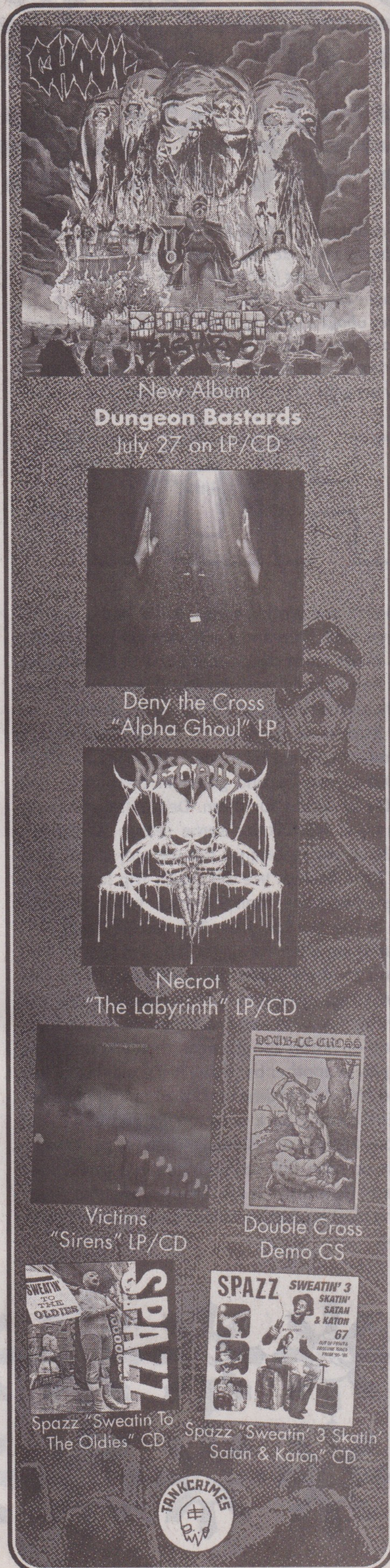








Clockwise from top left:
Victoria Law, Mural in Backyard, 1996; Sculpture by English Steve, 1996; ABC No Rio Entry, 2007. Chris Villafuerte, Ceiling in the Computer Center, 2014; Floor in the Office, 2014.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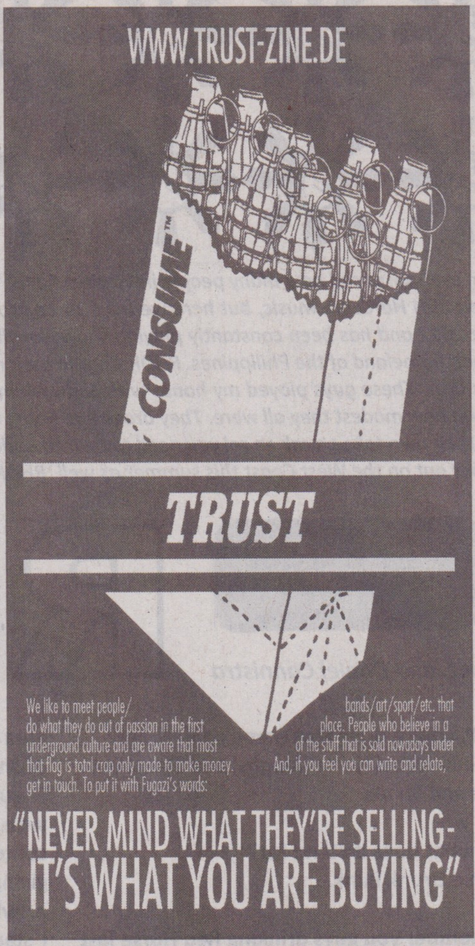
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RHDP is the best band you've never heard. Hell, I'm even surprised how many people in Virginia haven't heard them before! RHDP hails from the Virginia Beach, a scene that tends to be dominated by capitial-H Hardcore music, but here we have three brothers who make ripping Motörhead / Annhilation Time hardcore punk. RHDP has been around since 2012 and has been constantly playing shows locally since. Expert high-energy live sets are fueled by Red Horse, an "extra-strong lager" brewed from their homeland of the Philippines. RHDP sings in their native tongue of Tagalog and pays tribute to bands like Deadends, Urban Bandits, IOV, and Juan de la Cruz. These guys played my house with Slimy Member about a year ago and this was the first time I really got to know any of them. I was first struck with how modest they all were. They drove two hours each way to play that show in my kitchen and they were all just beyond stoked on it. These guys have their own take on rak en rol you need to hear to understand. Watch out for their new 7" coming out on Tension Head Records this summer and for their tour out on the West Coast this summer as well. RHDP may have not toured through your town just yet, but they should most definitely be on your radar.

TJ: guitar & vocals.
Phil: drums.
Markus: bass.

RHDP

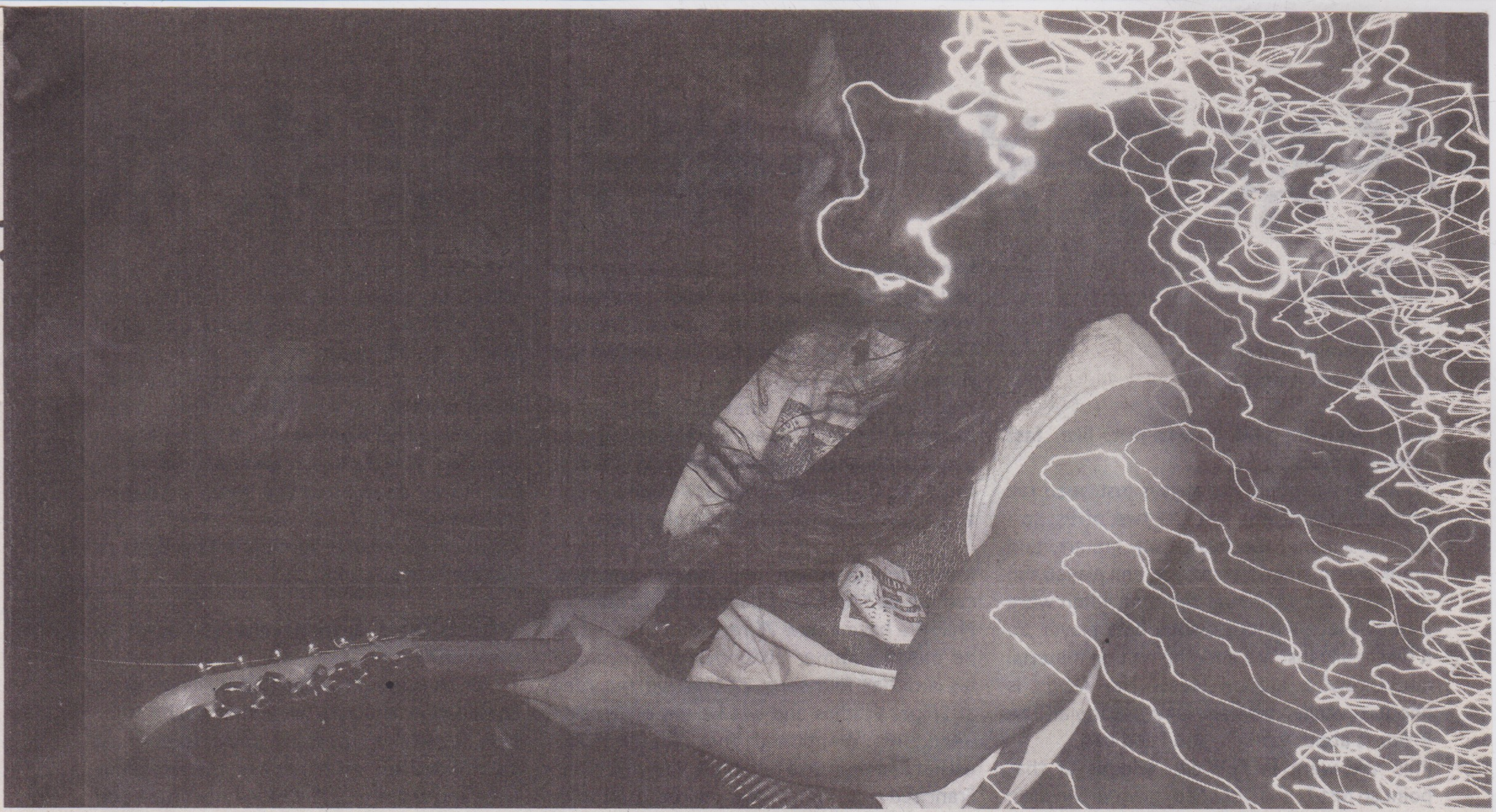
Intro and Interview by Brian Eric Baynes
Photos by Kevicious, Kenny Buchanan, Bryant, and Daniel Cannistra
Art by Jeff Crag

MRR: RHDP, where does that name come from?
TJ: From drinking Red Horse [*laughs*] and listening to Speed Glue and Shinki.

MRR: And what does it stand for?
TJ: Red Horse Drunk Punk.

MRR: I remember you guys drinking Red Horse last time I saw you play Richmond. You guys snuck that into the bar?
TJ: Uh, yes I did, it's not a RHDP show without it.
Phil: I choose to believe they see him coming and just serve him Red Horse.

MRR: How did you guys start RHDP? How did it come to be?
TJ: RHDP started out as a one-man band around 2007. I was just writing songs and recording them myself and I would play guitar, bass, drums, and then sing over it. At the time I played in other bands, Fratboys and Bomber, and there would be songs I would write for them that wouldn't make the cut so I would record them myself. The first song off the demo tape, "RHDP Way," was a song I wrote for Bomber that didn't fit. The RHDP name came about in 2009 or so when I was just drinking a lot of Red Horse and playing in a bunch of other Virginia Beach area bands and writing songs. RHDP had a handful of shows back then and a different kind of rotating lineup made up of dudes that I was in other bands with. I had no solid plans for RHDP back then. I was content with writing and recording my material and giving it away on burned CDs to my close friends or whoever seemed interested. Then around 2011 I started to play second guitar in Death Trip. Phil was playing drums for them. Death Trip did really well around Norfolk for some reason. We didn't really have any recordings but we played out a lot in the Norfolk area. We did Death Trip for about a year as a five-piece, then the singer left to do other bands in the Norfolk area. The rest of Death Trip kept jamming after the singer left, and that's when I started to show them the RHDP material I had written. I stepped up and sang and played guitar and that's when we wrote and recorded the demo tape. That line-up lasted about a year, then Erik and Ryan left to play in another band and RHDP was left to just me and Phil. At this time we did a handful of shows with Erik coming back occasionally and our friend Kevicious filling in occasionally. Then we got Markus to fill in on bass. I played with him in a band called Alkatrash. Now RHDP is me, Markus, and Phil.
Phil: And most productive lineup I'd say, wouldn't you?
TJ: Yeah.



Phil: So its kind of like we were all jamming together in Death Trip and now we're doing RHDP.

MRR: Cool. So I've seen you guys play in Richmond three times. I always think of you guys as semi-local or as an honorary Richmond band. Can you guys talk about living in Virginia Beach and the music scene there and compare it with Richmond?

TJ: [*laughs*] Living in Virginia Beach is living in Virginia Beach. I can't really say much; I only have a couple friends that I hang around with and the music scene is nothing like the music scene in Richmond.

Phil: I used to live in Richmond around 2008 to 2009, lived there for a couple years prior to moving back to Virginia Beach. The Richmond scene is a lot better than what we have going on in Virginia Beach. I feel like more people like us up in Richmond than they do down here in Virginia Beach. It's kind of hard for us to get people to come out to our shows in either VB or Norfolk, and we have a lot more fun when we play up there.

MRR: So TJ, you were born in the Philippines and you sing in Tagalog.

TJ: Yeah, I was born and raised in the Philippines, made in the Philippines. The songs I write are about life, experiences, women, rock'n'roll, Red Horse beer, and Philippine Island.

MRR: Hell yeah. Did punk music ever come into your life while you were living in the Philippines? How long did you live there?

TJ: I was born and lived there for about fourteen years and then I moved here. And punk was just a word when I was back there and it didn't really come up to me until I was over here. I had to find my way through and dig myself in.

MRR: I've seen RHDP promo photos of you guys paying tribute to bands like Dead Ends and Urban Bandits. Can you talk about some Filipino punk, or anything that you know that's coming out now?

TJ: Filipino '80s hardcore bands are one of the main reasons that RHDP has that sound/attitude towards everything, writing- and music-wise. It was pure, raw, and aggressive, not trying to fit in with the new or whatever. Also Pinoy rock. Rebellious. Now there are a lot of bands coming out but I'm not really up to date with it [*laughs*]. There is NSI from Brooklyn, and there is a good Filipino band in California called Anino Ko. There is a pretty active label/distro out in San Francisco called Aklasan and they do a lot for Filipino punk. They do a Filipino punk fest every year out there called Aklasan Fest

Phil: Yeah we played with NSI up in New York a couple summers ago. They're awesome, you should check 'em out. Aren't they doing another band up there?

TJ: Yeah.

Phil: Are they all Filipino?

TJ: I think there is one American guy in there.

Phil: So kind of like RHDP then. [*laughs*]

MRR: Can you talk about your goals as a band, as far as sound? You want to talk about your last 7" you put out about a year ago, *Parusa*? I have a friend, my old roommate Ian, when he first showed me that 7" he described it as a bong clearer of a 7".

TJ: [*laughs*]
Phil: A what?

MRR: A bong clearer
Phil: OK, that'll work

MRR: Yeah he said it was just, like, fast ripping guitars.
TJ: As far as sound, it's always just been rak en rol. [*Parusa*] was just the two of us, so I did the singing, the bass, both guitars, and drank a whole Red Horse case. Phil played the drums. It was written at the time when were a three-piece without a solid bass player. So it was really just me and Phil writing material and throwing around ideas. The A-side is about revenge, payback and paranoia. The B-side is about women, good and bad.
Phil: We were in between lineups at that point so just TJ and I headed down to Moyock, NC, to Sniper Studios. In my opinion it's the best studio in our area. The dude that runs it Vince is cool and easy to work with. More of an engineer than a producer. He doesn't try to push a sound on you, he just tries to figure out what you're doing and helps you get there, you know what I mean?

MRR: I picked that 7" up when you played my house. You played with Slimy Member and I remember you guys mentioning you also had an alter ego as a blues rock band as well.
TJ: [*laughs*] Some, most riffs are influenced by blues.
Phil: I wouldn't really call it an alter ego, but through the process of writing everything for RHQP we have some bluesy stuff.
TJ: I've always written rhythm and blues stuff while making rak en rol.
Phil: We have about eight just straight blues songs that we have written from just messing around with TJ's material at practice. In fact we were talking about doing an all blues cassette and calling it *Blue Horse* [*laughs*].

MRR: I also remember at that same house show, one of you guys was vaping really hard, people thought I had my fog machine on.
Phil: That was Markus, the Filipino Fog Machine. He made the whole room smell like pancakes.

MRR: Yeah, I had multiple people ask me to turn my fog machine off.
Phil: Well you can't turn Markus off, he is just always on.

MRR: Yeah and that night you guys were just handing out Red Horse. I paid you guys like $60 and I think you drove back to Virginia Beach that night. I was just super impressed. That was the first night I had you booked at a show I was running.
Phil: We are always pumped to play out of town, we think it's always a privilege to get to play a show anywhere, and that was a badass show. We had never played at Venible before, and it was cool to finally get to play there.

MRR: You guys got any plans? Any tour coming up? Another release coming out?
Phil: We have a new 7" recorded that should be out in summer 2016 called "*Silinyador.*" It's another four-song 7" that we recorded at Sniper Studios and will be out on Tension Head. We mentioned the Aklasan Label earlier and they do a fest every year out in San Francisco and Rupert has invited us to play the past couple of years but we haven't been able to. He invited again for this year and we are going to make it happen.
TJ: [The show is] July 16.

MRR: Awesome. I read that Red Horse has a music festival, they ever asked you to play?
TJ: [*laughs*] Muziklaban. [*laughs*] I don't think that's going to happen.
Phil: I mean if Red Horse is reading this and they want to buy us plane tickets and fly us out to play it, we will definitely go play it [*laughs*].

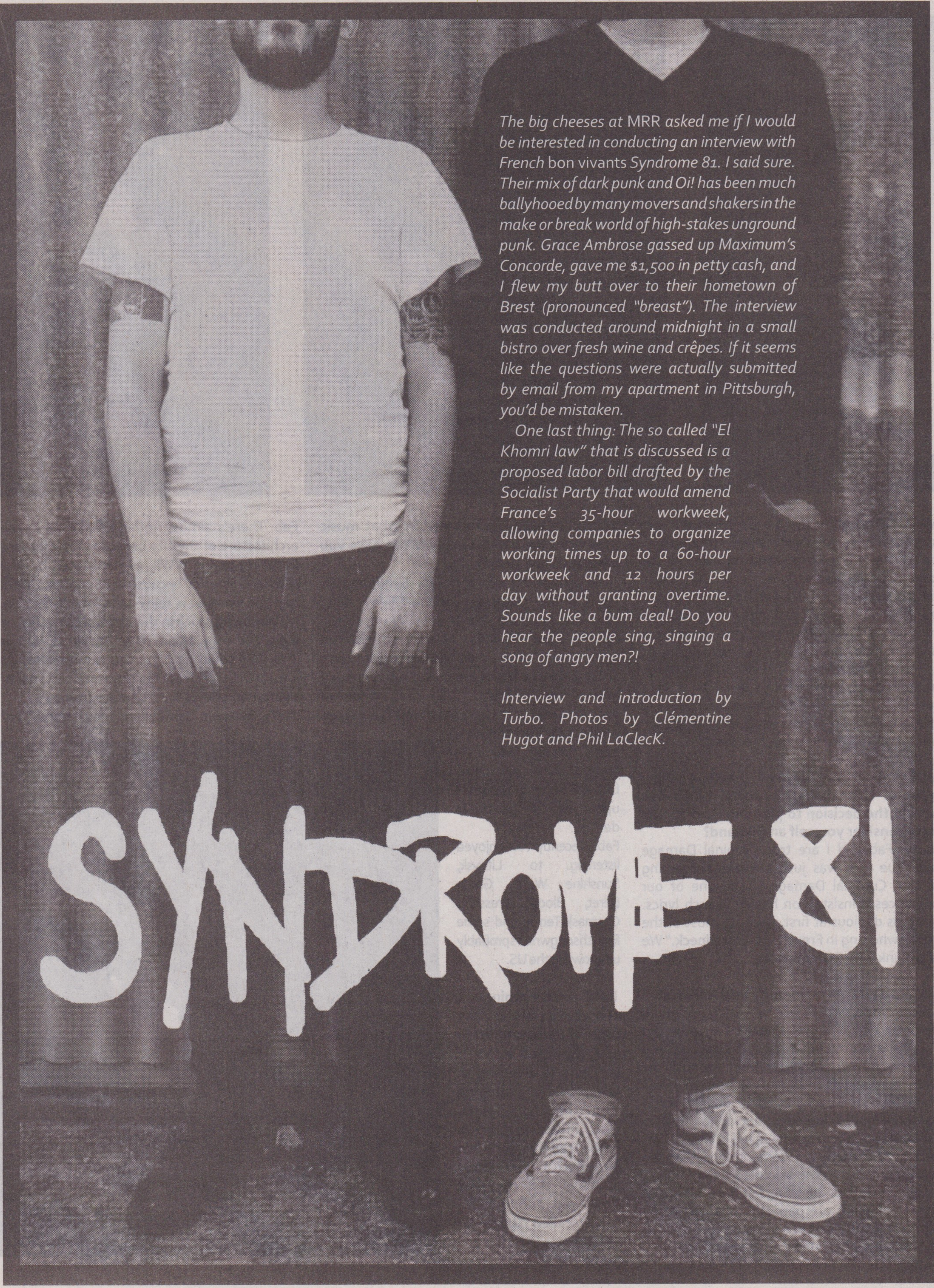
MRR: Are there any bands in the Virginia Beach / Norfolk area we should know about?
Phil: There is a band down here that we gig with a lot called the Dream. They're pretty cool, have some awesome guitar riffs, good leads, overall pretty rocking stuff. I think they are on Bandcamp under "DreamVA" if you want to lay your ears on them. Other than them check out Bato and Lethal Means from the Virginia Beach area, and we really like Firing Squad, Fried Egg, and Christi from Richmond.
TJ: [*laughs*] Kind of three different bands there but they are all good.

MRR: Is there anything else you want to mention?
TJ: We contributed a song to this Filipino punk compilation. Not sure when that will be out.
Phil: We will be possibly doing some west coast dates around Aklasan, some weekends here and there and Richmond next time you book us. Other than that we have been writing for an LP and will hopefully start demoing for it soon.

MRR: Cool, well hopefully you guys got enough Red Horse to get the record out, inspire some crazy lyrics.
TJ: [*laughs*]
Phil: Well that's TJ's department.

Catch RHDP July 15 at The Tubes in Oakland, CA, or July 16 during Aklasan Fest at 924 Gilman.

rhdp.bandcamp.com

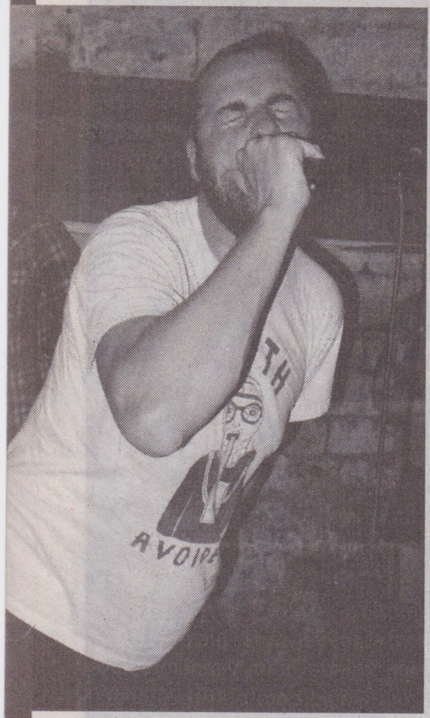


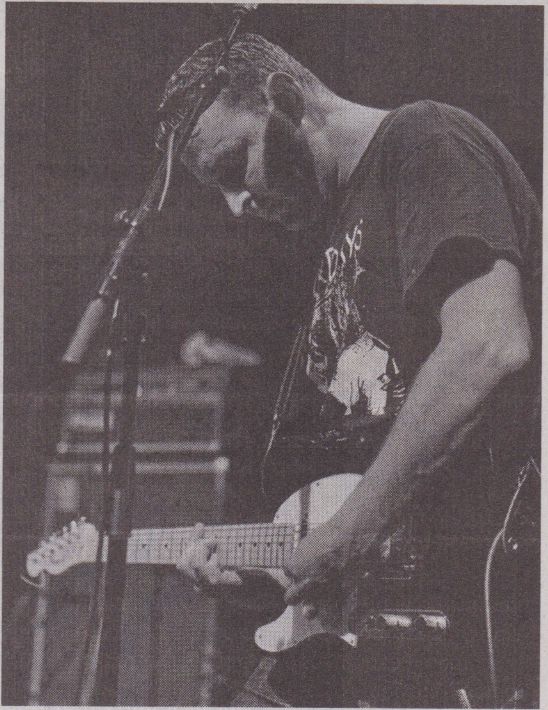
The big cheeses at MRR asked me if I would be interested in conducting an interview with French bon vivants *Syndrome 81. I said sure. Their mix of dark punk and Oi! has been much ballyhooed by many movers and shakers in the make or break world of high-stakes unground punk. Grace Ambrose gassed up Maximum's Concorde, gave me $1,500 in petty cash, and I flew my butt over to their hometown of Brest (pronounced "breast"). The interview was conducted around midnight in a small bistro over fresh wine and crêpes. If it seems like the questions were actually submitted by email from my apartment in Pittsburgh, you'd be mistaken.*

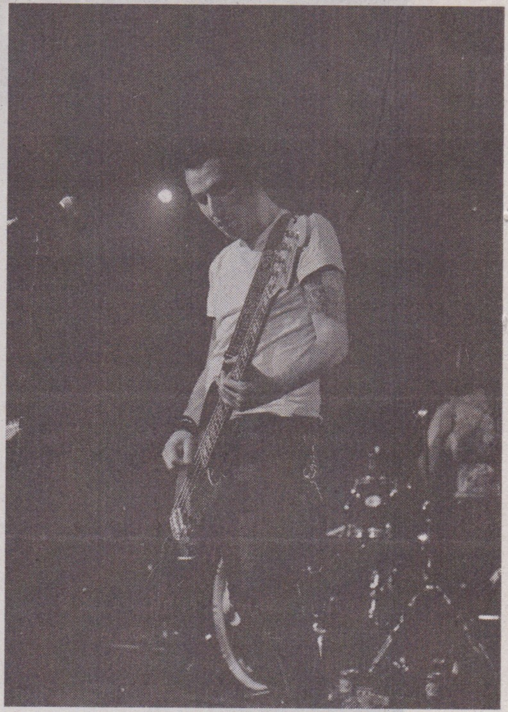
One last thing: The so called "El Khomri law" that is discussed is a proposed labor bill drafted by the Socialist Party that would amend France's 35-hour workweek, allowing companies to organize working times up to a 60-hour workweek and 12 hours per day without granting overtime. Sounds like a bum deal! Do you hear the people sing, singing a song of angry men?!

Interview and introduction by Turbo. Photos by Clémentine Hugot and Phil LaClecK.

SYNDROME 81







MRR: Who's all in the band? When did you start and have you kept a steady line-up?
Jacky: We started the band in 2013. At the beginning it was only a recording studio project between Fabrice and I. After the end of our previous band Thrashington DC, Fab had to move far away from Brest due to his work and the idea was just to keep making music together. We released a well-received demo in September 2013, so we started to make a real band. Since the beginning we have had the same line-up: Fab (vocals), Mitch and Dam (guitars), Tim (drums), and me (bass).

MRR: You all have played in previous bands, most of them being hardcore. What was behind the decision to play Oi!? And do you even consider yourself an Oi! band?
Jacky: Fab and I are true Criminal Damage fans; the idea was just to make something similar. Criminal Damage is still one of our influences. I insisted on having French lyrics. Fab was dubious at first, because most of the bands who sing in French sound "redneck." We play punk with Oi! influences.

MRR: Do any of you identify as skinheads?
Jacky: Nope, we're just a bunch of punk/hardcore kids. (OK, we're not kids anymore!)
Fab: I shaved my head because I was getting bald, not for pure coquetry. More seriously we have skinhead friends and respect for their scene but our background is mainly punk/hardcore, and so we didn't decide to dress up as skinheads. Sorry for the failed cliché!
Jacky: And there are some things that we really don't like in the skinhead scene. I don't know how it is in the USA, but here in Europe some skinheads are patriotic shits. We really don't want to be part of a patriotic scene; we're not proud of our country or shit like that.

MRR: I'm always interested in what music motivates the bands I enjoy. What have you been listening to recently?
Jacky: My main influences for Syndrome 81 are Criminal Damage, Camera Silens, Blitz, Negative Approach, the Vicious, Warrior Kids, No Hope For The Kids...recently I discovered a San Diego band called the Soft Pack. Don't know if they're famous in the USA but nobody knows them in France. Their first LP (out in 2011, I guess) is really great if you like garage rock/punk. For the new stuff, the No Time full-length is really great, Litovsk LP, the Hammer upcoming EP, Bombers demo...
Fab: Recently I've enjoyed listening to Litovsk, Sunshine Ward, Green Beret, Blood Pressure, Gasmask Terrör, and some Frenchsongwritersprobably unknown in the US.

MRR: Something I appreciate about the tone of Syndrome 81 is how dark and gritty it is. There is a feeling in the music of trudging thru the daily grind. How much of that is influenced by your town of Brest? I understand a lot of the city was destroyed during WW2 (the so called "Battle for Brest").

Fab: There's almost nothing historical in the architecture of the city because of the intense bombing during WWII, as you stated. So the town is quite grey because of its concrete walls and the weather is rainy—the French Seattle. It's like being stuck in the same season all year long. The song "Rainy Day" by No Hope For The Kids could describe this atmosphere. As we are the product of our environment, I guess our music reflects the city we're from.
Jacky: Between October and May it rains every

fuckin' day. If you add the grey walls, it's hard to not get winter depression, so we all go to bars. *[laughs]*

MRR: Brest plays an important role in the history of French Oi! and punk. The infamous Rebelles Européens was based there. Brutal Combat, Collabos, and Al Kapott also called it home. Even though Blitz and Criminal Damage are obvious influences, to my ears Syndrome 81 has a very French sound. The vocals are also in French.

Fab: As Jacky pointed earlier, it was intentional to sing in French. I took it as a challenge even though I was dubious.

Brest is a rock city with a punk scene that has been around with its ups and downs since the early '80s with the bands you stated. But again, to be honest, we grew up on US hardcore mostly...Nevertheless, we're friends with the guys from Les Collabos and Al Kapott, who are still around and supportive of the Brest punk scene.

Jacky: And it's funny because when they started Les Collabos, Fred the drummer told me that thay wanted to sound hardcore like us. I'm quite sure that the song "Agenouillé dans les WC" is a rip off of the first Bad Brains songs.

Mitch: There were a lot of punk bands in the early '80s in Brest, and Al Kapott and Les Collabos are the most famous. I think it's partly due to the proximity to England. When we talk with friends who played in these old bands, they often talk about travels in England where they found a lot of new music. Back in Brest, they tried to do the same. But talking with them is an especially good way to listen to a lot of funny stories that happened in the '80s in Brest. Otherwise, we are not really proud of Brutal Combat.

MRR: French Oi!/punk is experiencing a surge of popularity in the USA thanks in part to labels like Une Vie Pour Rien? and Euthanasie, who reissue classic French bands. How did you get involved with *La Force Dans La Oi! Vol. 2*? Are you dudes feeling the hype over there? What's been the reception to your band at home?

Fab: Ben from UVPR contacted us, we knew the label by name but not the people behind it, 'cause once again we were more into the punk/HXC scene and the skinhead scene is quite separated from the rest. But we mostly knew all the guys involved in the bands who appear on the compilation, so it was quite natural to do it. And Ben from UVPR did a great job on that record, and so we are grateful to him.

I was quite surprised at first. I didn't think we'd get interest abroad because of the French lyrics, but it was stupid 'cause I listen to lots of bands singing in their native tongues anyway. But I didn't expect to get such great feedback, even here in France, when we released our demo tape. People immediately asked us to repress it on a proper record and asked to release our future releases, which is quite satisfying! Nowadays I can sense that hype around the French Oi! revival with bands like us or Rixe. It's just funny to me, there are always trends in the punk/hardcore scene. Yesterday New Wave punk revival, today Oi!, tomorrow something else...

Mitch: It's funny to see this interest for old French bands. It's good if it permits people to discover good old songs. I personally hope people will not only focus on "classic French Oi!" and interest themselves in all the French alternative rock scene of the '80s, which was something pretty important with good labels, fanzines, bands...With good attitude, lyrics... The book *Nyark Nyark* is interesting and about that (only in French, I think).

It seems the reception is good for Syndrome 81 in France. And it's a pleasure when we play gigs to see a lot of different people: Oi! friendly people, hardcore kids, crusts, punks...It's good if it permits people to mix and touch who listen to different kinds of music.

MRR: Do you feel a connection to Paris or Nantes or Lille bands? Are the scenes connected?

Jacky: The French punk scene is pretty small (compared to the other big European countries), so everybody knows everybody. We've known some guys from Traitre for maybe ten years from when we met them when we played with our previous band (Thrashington DC), and Lille is a cool place to play. I played with Max from Rixe in a hardcore band when I was in Paris. Ben of UVPR records and Fred of Outreau are greats guys, too.

Fab: We've been in touch with the guys from Lille for a long time now and played some of our coolest shows over there! It's a small world for sure here in France.

MRR: Is there a pull to leave your home and move to a bigger city?
Jacky: The main problem with Brest is that it's far away from everything but I really don't want to live in another city in France. Weather is shitty, buildings are grey and ugly, but people are really friendly. I don't know how to really explain, but I think that people are more "true" than most other cities. Fab had to leave for work reasons to other cities and I think that he'll explain way better than me why we love Brest.
Fab: Livin' in exile sucks and I miss Brest a lot! I think everything is simpler than in other bigger cities...Even though everything ain't perfect, I'd love to come back there one day.
Jacky: And he misses me, too. Where's my bar soldier?

MRR: You guys are playing the Beech, Beer, Chaos fest in Barcelona this year. The line-up for that thing is amazing, Noi!se, Lion's Law, and the Janitors, among others. How often do you get to tour? I imagine Oi! doesn't pay the bills. You all have day jobs?
Jacky: We play like between 25 and 35 shows per year. Two tours and some shows here and there. It's not easy because Fab doesn't live in Brest and some of us have kids. Oi! doesn't pay the bills, but I must admit it does way better than hardcore music! *[laughs]* We don't lose money and we're happy with that. I don't want to make money with my passion. We all work in Syndrome 81. Tim and I are teachers, Fab is a state worker, Dam works as a technician in an engineering office (but to tell the truth he spends most of his time on the internet), and Mitch works for local TV.

MRR: So far Syndrome 81 has recorded a demo that's been pressed to vinyl, you have a five-song EP, a split with your buddies Litovsk, and a track on *Force Dans La Oi!* What considerations went into the choice to press an EP and record various other tracks versus writing songs for a full album?
Jacky: Good question. I'm an old school guy. For me, a band must do in this order a demo, an EP, maybe some split 7", and after that a full-length. We're working on our first full-length. It will take some time because everybody in the band is busy and we want to take some time to do things well. We'll try to record our album before the end of the year.

MRR: On the *Désert Urbain* EP, there is a song titled "À Feu Et À Sang" about the Siege of Sarajevo. Can you explain what's behind that song?
Fab: I read a lot about the events in ex-Yugoslavia. I was only a kid at the time it happened and what we were served in the media were shortcuts. So I took a recent interest in this period, reading lots of stuff on the subject, mostly books written by war reporters. It was war at the gates of the European Union in the '90s! Unbelievable. Behind that song is the story beneath history—it's the human comedy. I took the siege of Sarejevo as an allegory of the whole of events that happened during the Yugoslavian wars. People were separated, homes were broken, people didn't even know what they were fighting for. You were brothers one day and the day after you were enemies. I read some terrible stuff about the genocide in Rwanda too, especially things written by Jean Hatzfeld, who wrote about the Yugoslavian wars as well. And it was a good way to tell D-beat bands that they don't have the monopoly over war songs!

MRR: On the song "Traitre," a lyric that stands out is "*Nous cracherons sur ta tombe!*" which Google tells me translates as "We spit on your grave!" The song is an excellent hardcore stunner. When I sing along, whose grave am I spitting on?
Fab: You're spitting on Denis Donaldson's grave but you shouldn't. The man didn't deserve that. It's the Real IRA speaking. I've read two books by French writer Sorj Chalandon about his friendship with Donaldson, which are quite moving. The guy was an IRA member who happened to be a spy for the Brits and who ended violently murdered by the Real IRA. The books are great because it shows the complexity of the Irish conflict and the stories within history. A few songs have been inspired by novels I read.

MRR: I would characterize the tone of the band's lyrics as personal and not overtly political. With what's been going on regarding French labor issues, specifically the El Khomri law and the attacks in Paris and the political repercussions—the rise in ultranationalism and the new surveillance laws—do you feel pressure to go beyond "politics of the street" and address or confront topics like these outright?
Fab: I guess you're right, it's more personal, but I didn't feel like writing anthemic songs. Some bands are good at writing political songs, like Crisis for example. Sometimes actions speak louder than words, so it seems too easy to me to write shallow protest songs. But I went demonstrating against the El Khomri law even though I don't believe in demonstrating and strikes anymore. I know where I stand politically and I don't feel like preaching to the converted. Nevertheless I feel concerned by the situation. We live in an oligarchic *état de droit* while we brag about French democracy and human rights—big joke! But who knows, I may have a song in store about the French situation these days for Syndrome 81 or another band... In times of economic depression, you see the same shitty nationalist ideas gaining ground, which is quite depressing...
Mitch: There are so many things to say about the situation here. Government is playing a sad game. Indeed, protestation against the El Khomri law quickly gave way to something more global brought to life by young people against capitalism, government stupidity, and police oppression. It's exciting to see people in the street attacking police stations and banks. But government uses these acts of "vandalism" to undermine the credibility of determined people to represent them as crazy people without aim when their actions make sense. So today, when media talks about the El Khomri law or social movements, they only talk about those "dangerous breakers," which today becomes a sort of myth. It's a victory for the government because the media talks less about the people's demands and the absurdity of this law because it justifies police brutality on young people. And moreover they found a way to discourage people to go down in the streets by depicting protest marches as really dangerous areas. The state of emergency after the attacks in Paris permit that too. The question now is are French people so stupid they believe in it? I would say yes. I saw yesterday a Facebook account called "Rennes Against Breakers," a shitty thing created by Rennes city inhabitants who want calm to return in their "wonderful city." This account became really famous in one day and was relayed in local papers.

On the bright side, it permits new forms of activism, new autonomous movements to emerge from the shadow with new methods that differ from old trade unions ones. But in France, people are not ready for these things. So it creates confusions, tensions...But maybe it's the beginning of new interesting things. When this interview is published, the situation will probably be totally different.

MRR: Finishing up, what's in store for Syndrome 81? Any plans to tour the USA?
Fab: We've got a 7" coming out in early June on our friend Jeremy's label, Build Me A Bomb Records, then there should be a split 7" with our Swedish buddies from Urban Savage, and then we're going to focus on recording our first LP after summer.

We'd like to come over for sure. Some people from US bands have been asking the same question. As I said, I'm still surprised some people outside France find interest in Syndrome 81! So wait and see...We're gonna do a small European tour this fall first!

SYNDROME 81

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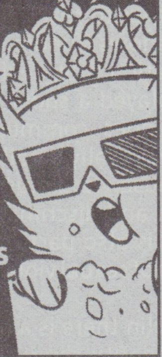

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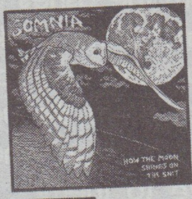

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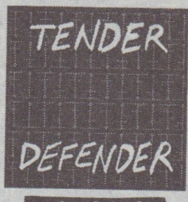

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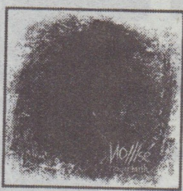

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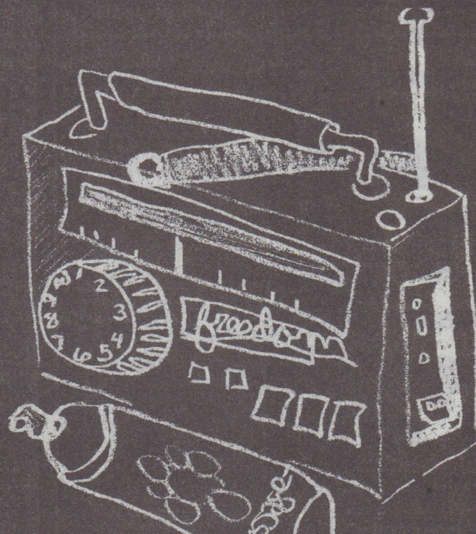

FRIEND CRUSH

Interview and introduction by Anna Vo. Photos provided by René Greffin and Erik Paladin.

From the ashes of the stalwart of feminist hardcore in Berlin, Ex-Best Friends, comes trans* emo punk band Friend Crush! Relatively new, just finishing up a European tour with Hot Tears, they are winning hearts all over. I was lucky enough to tour with them through Central and Eastern Europe two summers ago. They were an inspiration in what an awesome chosen family can look like. Listen to them! Biggest love to them!

MRR: Tell us about how your band formed.

Friend Crush formed in October of 2013 when we played our first show at Bei Ruth in Berlin. The three of us met at Ruby Tuesday as organizers of a rock and hip-hop camp for girls, trans*, and inter* youth. We were part of a working group who wanted to change things in the organization regarding themes of multiple oppressions and intersectionality.

Andrzej and Cash were discussing their own experiences of classism, gender discrimination, and sexism within the hardcore/punk scene where both of them grew up. Clara joined in with sharing her experiences of transmisogyny in hardcore/punk scenes and also in feminist and (womenlesbiantrans*) spaces. Clara and Cash played in a band together before which was a queer punk band called Käptn Awesome and Andrzej had played in Ex Best Friends. We all wanted to have a band that would be an important part of our lives. Andrzej and Cash have been playing in bands for over fifteen years and talked about how important that would always be for them. We come from different directions in hardcore/punk but have a lot of intersections of what we like. We also wanted to have an emo/screamo band because working with emotions in the process of learning is a very important thing for us and in the way we make music. We are all very good friends that live in Berlin near each other. We rehearse every week, eat together, and talk about our struggles to try to find solutions to keep on going.

MRR: Tell us about your politics!

So one thing is that we share every part of the songwriting process. We are always developing songs out of jamming and we also write lyrics together. We talked a lot about how we prefer to do-it-together than do-it-yourself. Coming from a DIY background, community work with all its processes is actually a place to learn and grow. Andrzej was influenced by the DIY attitude of riot grrrl, which felt good and liberating on one hand, but also created a feeling of how you need to be really strong and tough and independent all the time and be able to do everything yourself, which can be very exhausting.

Also since DIY has been sold out to neoliberalist capitalism through individualist start-ups and you see little shops everywhere as part of gentrification where you can buy "self-crafted" things, maybe it's time for a change. For us working with different people is where the work is—to change yourself within the empowerment of a community. We try to believe in each other and therefore be honest, to go through difficult situations together,as well as building structures that help us survive and continue.

Our songs are mostly describing experiences of different forms of violence, discrimination, and power, but also our own potential to become perpetrators and the struggle to find ways to deal with accountability. We try to play in different settings and also to make a connection to themes in the spaces we are playing. That works well because our songs deal with questions activists may also ask themselves. A lot of people might think about how to change systems of oppression while being a part of them at the same time; or how to change things if everything feels so big and you feel so small. We talk a lot about how important it is to connect different struggles with each other to really force change. We really like to play soli-shows (fundraisers) that support political self-organization that deals with anti-oppression. In Leipzig we played a show which was a benefit for a group that does community accountability work. This show was really small but we were really happy to play because we discussed transformative justice and violence and discrimination within scenes a lot, and Andrzej is also part of a group that works with perpetrators of sexual violence towards accountability action.

Also in Berlin there is a big refugee movement. We played a solidarity show for a squat for refugees to self-organize (Ohlauer school). We also did a song in dealing with our privilege to be able to choose to join these fights, or as people without German citizenship and about (im)possibilities of connecting different lives and everyday struggle with each other to create real change and not new dependencies within old lines of oppression.

We also just played in Neuruppin where Cash grew up, a little town near Berlin where anti-fascists do a lot of work in a very white area which has a lot of right-wing inhabitants and active Nazis.

We also play a lot in queer-feminist contexts. As trans* people we experience a lot of shit if people constantly misgender us, or if it is a problem if you want to go to the toilet and there are just male and female options. It might not sound so big but can get really annoying if you experience this shit constantly. So we love also playing in places where people are trans-aware (and generally aware about microaggressions and anti-oppression). So if we decide where to play, we have a good look at the politics of the people organizing the shows. We also play in places that are not trans-aware if we think it's important. But we try to build a safety net around it so we can do that.

We are also all over 30 and do not drink alcohol at our shows or rehearsals (two do not drink at all). Therefore we try to take our needs seriously and do self-care around our shows (like going to nature, having rest). Also at our rehearsals we eat together and check in on what everyone needs to feel good. So for all of us the band is also a necessary place for self-care and growing together.

MRR: Do you think a "queer band" or a description like this is helpful?

We are using the labels "queer emo punk Berlin" or "all-trans* emo punk." For us it was important somehow to mark that we are not an all-cis-dudes band and also not "female-fronted." We never wanted to be a riot grrrl band or an "all-girl band" because not all of us (just) feel like "girls." We would rather see us in tradition with queer punk like Tribe 8 than with riot grrrl like Bikini Kill.

Still it was from the beginning important to us to mark that we are coming from a queer-feminist perspective because the "radical left" and the hardcore/punk scenes are very heteronormative despite several people coming out as trans* and queer. In Berlin there is a small but active queer-feminist punk scene that we consider ourselves connected to.

At some point we thought it necessary to say that we are all trans* because we got a lot of requests from Ladyfests and other events that were searching for all-women bands or female-fronted bands. We felt misgendered constantly and so we thought if we created our own description, people might take that seriously. Also we don't know any other emo-punk band who is all-trans* (if there is, please get in contact!), so we thought it would be a good idea to make it visible so other trans* people can relate to us.

But, we also have had bad experiences with that label. It's strange to be the only band on a poster with their gender expression displayed. Also, people still refer to us at concerts as "women-band," or ask us to play a "female-fronted" festival. It's really sad if you are open and make yourself so vulnerable by sharing private information in public and then people just don't want to see it or pretend not to see it. It hurts more than people just not knowing.

But the best thing would be to stop assuming people's gender and start trying to think and ask about people's different needs while organizing concerts. It's not just trans-discrimination, it's also that most concert venues in hardcore/punk are not accessible for wheelchairs or people who cannot be in small rooms full of smoke in the middle of the night. It's not a coincidence who is coming to concerts—they are mainly white, able-bodied, cis male-dominated if there isn't another special label on it. Also, if there is a label on it, it doesn't mean that the space is free of oppression. If we play in queer-feminist contexts it's mainly white-dominated and not always trans-aware. We experience getting misgendered and there are cases of belonging/notbelonging.

MRR: What releases do you have and where have you toured?

We are a bit slow with recordings, so we just have one release with six songs so far, which you can find on Bandcamp. At the moment we are writing more songs and already have five new ones since the last release, so we hope to record soon again. We will go on tour in May with our friend Molly's project Hot Tears. We met Molly Fischer at Queer Rock Camp Olympia, where we volunteered. Also from this connection we know RVIVR with whom we played in Berlin twice. We were really happy to get the chance to play at Bent Fest in 2015—a two day festival where only queer bands were playing; or the F-word festival in Amsterdam, who connect queer-feminist politics and music and try to find new labels. We did a mini-tour of Finland in Summer 2015 and our first tour (and the longest) with xFirstWorldProblemx and Still Breathing through Germany, Czech Republic, Croatia, and Slovenia in 2014. In between we played a lot of smaller shows in different places in Germany.

MRR: How did you decide your style of music?

We didn't really decide on our style of music. More a direction. We generally try out a lot of stuff and then transform it if it gets too "rock" for example, or too "hardcore" or something. Then we try to deconstruct these parts. We mostly stay in the emo-punk/screamo genre but have a lot of different rhythms and parts and our music can also get quite pop sometimes.

We write all our music in the rehearsal space collectively by jamming. The songs are transfoming in different directions while at the same time we are

discussing how we are and our politics and everyday survival stuff. So most of the time a general topic is developing and we take it and transform it and work with it for some time and then we decide on how we feel that we can best express our feelings musically.

Most of the time, writing the music and the lyrics happens at the same time. We also write lyrics together in different processes of creative writing and then we take the best out of it.

Singing is always a big topic for us because it is closely linked to how people might perceive us—and for every person in the band it is a very personal issue as a trans* person because voice is often gendered normatively. But also to speak out is a very important part of our daily empowerment and very important for organizing and political change, so we always try do it although it feels uncomfortable.

Screaming out fears and anger and pain can also be so relieving that it can also feel very good.

MRR: What are your lyrics about?

We have a lot of topics we discuss at our band practice and usually we make songs about our experiences and controversies we have in our band and in our political activism outside the band. We try to address invisibilities and exclusion within different places we are in or moving through. Also in queer scenes and feminist scenes and within ourselves. We sing about classism, transphobia, racism, ableism, and consent. Big themes are community building and growing together and also how to change our own fears, sadness, and experiences of violence into activism and change.

MRR: What kind of work and organizing do you do?

Cash is working in a queer bar and as a teacher for youth who got thrown out of school for different reasons to support them to make it possible to get a basic school-degree. He and Clara are also organizers of the group LOUD/LAUT, which organizes music-empowerment events for queer youth and questioning youth who experience multiple forms of oppression. He also is part of a queer grief collective which organizes and gives support to each other about loss and grief and deals with personal/political accessibility and needs regarding to that themes. Andrzej is doing band-coaching for a teenagers who are refugees and came to Germany without any family members or relatives. Andrzej is also part of a group that is dealing with (sexual) consent, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and community accountability through transformative justice. Clara co-facilitates a queer youth group where Clara tries to support the participants of the group to empower themselves and gain self-confidence with all parts of their multiple identities. Clara also works in an anti-trans-discrimination project which focuses on rather marginalized groups within the trans* community such as trans* sex workers and older trans* and inter* people.

Clara, Andrzej, and Cash are also involved in a self-organized project that builds up two queer-feminist rehearsal spaces where there can be also workshops and stuff.

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BOILERMAN

Boilerman are a three-piece out of Chicago. Their music surges forth with power and urgency while melodies sneak their way in, challenging you to sing along—if you can keep up. It's everything you'd ever want out of punk; loud, fast, agitated, snotty, and a tad bit sloppy. Furthering a bountiful catalog that includes EPs, cassettes, and comps, they've recently released their second LP, Feels Ways About Stuff. I caught up with them shortly before the start of their April 2016 tour of Japan. Boilerman are Jim (guitar/vocals), Joey (drums), and Kris (bass/vocals).

Interview and introduction by Nathan G. O'Brien. Photos by Kaitlin Beer and Ross Adams.

MRR: Hey guys, I'm going to start by asking questions I've copied from '80s *Tiger Beat* magazines. Hope that's cool. First question: how were you discovered, and now that you're famous how does it feel?

Jim: I'd say we were discovered when we played our second show and Kris asked us to do a record with his dumb label. A few years later, he was in the band and I imagine he feels pretty good about being famous.

Kris: I make and break stars like Boilerman every day. Feel? What's that?

Joey: I've always been famous, so this is really all I know.

MRR: How do you deal with being celebrities and not getting big-headed?

Kris: My head is of normal size, thank you very much.

Jim: It's impossible to stay truly humble, but we like to just chill out and hang just like all the other youths.

Joey: We aren't as big of celebrities as Korn, so we aren't really that cool. When we write harder riffs than our nü metal idols and get recognized for it, I will have the biggest head.

MRR: Do you plan on going to college?

Jim: Been there, done that.

Joey: No, and unfortunately I think I am going to go to grad school.

Kris: My dad owns a dealership, so, like, I don't really need to go to college.

MRR: Are your ears pierced?
Jim: One of my ears is pierced, but I haven't put anything in it since I was thirteen, so it's probably healed. Does that even count?
Joey: I used to bend staples around my ears to pretend like they were pierced.
Kris: When I was in high school I got really into melodic hardcore and wanted to gauge my ears. Very thankful that never happened.

MRR: OK, that's it for the *Tiger Beat* questions. Now I'm going to ask you some very serious questions that I thought long and hard to come up with, like this one: have you ever had breakfast at Taco Bell? Would you ever consider becoming a breakfast defector?
Jim: I'm not sure what a breakfast defector is, but the first and only time I've eaten Taco Bell breakfast was on the 2015 Boilerman tour. It just tasted like Taco Bell, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I was not wowed.
Kris: The time on tour Jim is referencing was at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m. as soon as the Taco Bells started opening on our overnight drive from Toronto to Chicago. We were the only two awake and were both exhausted and it was heavenly. I had Taco Bell breakfast once or twice beforehand, and it is always a delight. I miss the waffle, though. The biscuit isn't as good.
Joey: I should see if they have breakfast at the Taco Bell in Tokyo. I walk by there all the time, but I've never gone in because my Japanese is too shitty to substitute things to make it veggie. Plus substituting food items over here is pretty difficult. *[Joey currently lives in Tokyo, Japan.]*

MRR: You guys seem like pretty nice guys. Would you say that's true? Do you think you're pretty good people?
Jim: Thanks. I think so. We generally get along with people. I'm good. Joey and Kris are tough to pinpoint, but to put it in terms everyone can understand, I think I'm probably chaotic good and I'd say they're both chaotic neutral.
Kris: I would agree with "Nice Guy" Jim that Chaotic Neutral is accurate. I would say I am morally straight, but also, I'm not that "good" because, like, Humanity Is the Devil, you know?
Joey: I've been told I'm a good person. I don't know if I believe it. I feel like I am a glass half full kind of person and tend to see a lot of good in people, which has gotten me into trouble in the past by being friends with and trusting truly awful people.

MRR: Do you ever get down on yourselves because you think you're not a good person?
Jim: Not really, but I have a lot of other reasons to get down on myself.
Joey: I recently went through a pretty tough breakup, and upon reflecting on how I treated them and generally being down about life, I didn't think too highly of myself. I'm starting to come around and like myself again.
Kris: Sometimes you'll dwell on mean things you've done to people and it can get you down. I don't, though. But also, seconding what Jim said.

MRR: How about regrets. Is there anything you've done, or, perhaps *didn't do*, that haunts you? A thing you'd change if you can go back and do it over?
Kris: There are decisions that I have made and/or not made that had I done the opposite, I might be happier or things would be easier, but I sort of believe that having regrets is pointless. Everything you come across in life is part of the journey, for better or worse, and there's little use in lamenting the bad things you come across. I do, however, have incredibly strong buyer's remorse when spending large amounts of money.
Jim: None for me. I think I've pretty much nailed it so far.
Joey: I regret getting into punk. My life would probably be so much better if I had never heard Green Day when I was eight. I would've gone to school to be a businessman, had a savings account, and be blissfully ignorant.

MRR: Well since you brought up punk, I guess were going to have to talk about it. Punk has so many rules that it can be hard to keep up sometimes. Can you be successful or wealthy and still be punk? Like when Justin Theroux wears a Crass beanie, is he not punk because he's doing it on the red carpet?
Kris: I find chasing "success" incredibly corny and musicians who actively try to find popularity or success related to popularity disingenuous. If your art is fulfilling to you as an artist, and also happens to bring you some sort of monetary wealth, I find no problems with that. I don't know who Justin Theroux is and I'm not going to Google it. Also, I don't like Crass so I'm clearly not punk and have no authority on this matter.
Jim: Did Justin Theroux actually wear a Crass beanie?

MRR: I think so but I guess I can't be certain. I might have made that up actually.
Jim: If he did, nice! I guess my measuring stick for this would be to look at how a person uses their wealth/success and how it affects those around them. Chumbawamba was still punk after they signed to a major in my eyes because they still operated by anarchist principles and took every chance they could to throw wrenches into gears of all kinds.
Joey: Justin Theroux is a beautiful human being. Him being a Crass fan gives me hope that I will find a beautiful Crass fan in real life.

MRR: When it comes to putting out records, how do you determine the label? What kind of factors do you consider?
Jim: We like to work with people we like and trust. That's pretty much it. We've been approached by most of the labels we've worked with, as opposed to the other way around, with a few exceptions. Generally, if we like the people, like their other output, and think they'll do their best to get the record to people, we're into it. It saves us a lot of work and money to have someone do a record for us, and it's very much appreciated.
Kris: When we were shopping around our first LP, we had a few friends that offered up interest in releasing it but what it came down to was can any of these people do a better job than we can? Or are they just putting up money so we don't have to and slapping their name on it? And I'm always appreciative of anyone's interest in my music, but I'm glad we self-released our first LP.

MRR: Your last three releases have come out on 86'd Records. You must be pretty happy with them.
Kris: 86'd has stepped up and has been putting out quality products for us with good turnaround time and distribution while saving us the headache of all that.

MRR: And Wells Tipley is a pretty cool guy eh? Used to write a column for *MRR* back in the '90s, I believe.
Kris: The first time I heard Bolt Thrower was thanks to him. He also really, really likes Manowar.
Jim: Wells is excellent. He treated us like kings when we were in Long Island. Anyone who wakes up houseguests by blasting Manowar is alright by me. I've never read any of his *MRR* columns, but I've liked a ton of records he's put out since the '90s. Also he played me a Splurge demo I've never heard before when we were on the Island and that's something I can't say about anyone else.
Joey: Wells is a saint and a total weirdo.

MRR: Are there things you do outside of the band—creative endeavors or otherwise—that influence your work within Boilerman?
Jim: It's hard to pinpoint things that influence Boilerman other than specific life stuff. I do other creative stuff—other bands, a label, zines sometimes—but that doesn't really affect Boilerman all that much. The

things that do are usually small day-to-day events that either make me feel something or shift my perspective somehow.

Kris: I don't think I really have hobbies that aren't music related. I like to cook, I guess. Do you want me to make a cooking analogy to Boilerman? I don't. It would be hard to nail down specific things that I channel into Boilerman. I think all the music I digest, down to things like how I'm feeling the day we practice, will find their way into how something comes about.

MRR: You mentioned zines. One of the great things about punk is that the people that are into it still prefer tangible items like zines, tapes, and vinyl records. Do you think that an online presence and digital music sharing is also important for a band?

Jim: I do think an online presence is helpful. As someone constantly trying to hear new music, it really helps when I can check out a band on Bandcamp or something. I'm not made of money and can't buy everything I want to hear, which I think is a pretty ubiquitous attitude these days.

Kris: I don't think a *presence* is as vital as just having the availability of music and relevant information. Bandcamp is an incredible tool that really changed the course of DIY bands, especially in terms of not only sharing free music but streaming it anywhere you'd like to. I've never paid for a digital download in my life, and would never ever expect anyone else to, and think that the ability to host high-quality free downloads is totally invaluable.

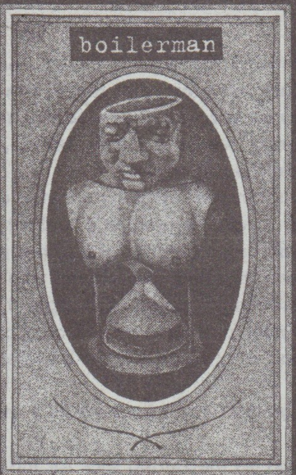
MRR: All of your stuff is available for free download right?

Jim: We have everything we've ever done on Bandcamp to download for free and have given away physical copies of stuff for free too. If people want to hear it, I'd like them to be able to, and none of us are deluded enough to think we'd be raking in the cash if that weren't the case. Online music sharing, despite the argument that can be made about oversaturation, is incredible and totally vital to how music is produced and consumed at this point.

MRR: Do your families know about the band? What do they think?

Joey: My parents and my brother have seen us play a few times. My dad always finds a way to say that we need a new singer and that I should be in an REO Speedwagon cover band.

Kris: My dad has this bizarre idea of us imprinted in his brain that we're some sort of raw punk band, and every time I give him a new recording he's amazed at the melodic elements of it. Time after time.



Boilerman Discography:

Demo CS, 2010 (self-released)

Bright Young Things 7", 2010 (Hip Kid / Ice Age)

Yield the Ghost 7", 2011 (Cowabunga)

Capped, Smothered, and Covered CS, 2011 (self-released)

Live on WHPK CS, 2012 (self-released)

Loss Leaders LP/CD, 2013 (self-released in US, All in Vinyl in the UK, and CD on Waterslide in Japan)

V/A – *B Sides* compilation 7", 2015 (Rad Girlfriend)

self-titled 10", 2015 (Crapoulet / 86'd / Waterslide)

Doing Great 7", 2015 (All In Vinyl / 86'd)

Feel Ways About Stuff LP, 2016, (All In Vinyl / 86'd / Sad Punk / Waterslide)

Jim: My family knows about it and is cool about it. My sister has seen Boilerman play.

MRR: Are they supportive?

Jim: Kris has the most supportive parents because they let us take over their house to record our *Feel Ways About Stuff* LP.

Kris: My parents, and dad in particular, have always been incredibly supportive and helpful in my music and other artistic journeys. My dad would drive my bands to our shows before I had a license, all my bands practiced in their basement throughout high school, and they even allowed me to record my bands and my friend's bands and even strangers' bands down there as a teenager. I'm incredibly thankful for all that. I think my mom has only come to one show of mine before, though. She's not as much of a real rocker as my dad. Dude loves to rock.

MRR: Can you talk a little bit about what kind of effect the Laquan McDonald shooting and other cases have had on you and/or your city?

Kris: I am constantly amazed at the public-at-large's inability or refusal to grasp the fact that the headlines are not "isolated incidents," but pieces of a larger, structural problem in our country. Not to mention the racist Judge Dredd-ian rationalizations you see pop up every time a victim of police brutality is accused of prior wrongdoings or the nitpicking of irrelevant details and widespread victim-blaming.

Jim: As you know (from living in Minneapolis), Chicago is not alone in its totally inept, unjust handling of police brutality. This stuff is happening constantly and widely in the US. Cops look out for cops as does the system by which they are employed. That should come as no surprise. It also came out somewhat recently that Chicago police have been operating a black site interrogation facility not far from where I live. This type of disgusting behavior has definitely caused a swell of people seeking justice through protests and other actions in Chicago. Luckily, one plus side of everyone having a computer in their pockets is that this stuff is being documented, shared, and exposed more thoroughly and more regularly than in the past. Hopefully these types of high profile cases, though tragic, will lead to a more reasonable ratio of justice to police racism and misconduct.

MRR: Before we get out of here, tell me a little bit about upcoming plans for the band. You're going on tour this year right?

Jim: Right now the only tour we've got planned concretely is Japan this April. We've been wanting to go there for a few years and since Joey is currently living there we figured now's the time. We'll be there for almost two weeks and are playing seven shows.

MRR: Are you playing with other bands?

Jim: We're going by ourselves but are playing with a bunch of Japanese bands. Some that I'm super stoked to see are Thirsty Chords, Turncoat, Big City (who we're doing three days with and features our friend from Chicago), and Navel. I can't wait to see the bands I haven't heard too.

MRR: Is this your first overseas tour? How are you preparing?

Jim: This is my first overseas tour and it's weird to plan for after doing a fair amount of touring in the US. The plan is to borrow pretty much all the gear, which is easy because everywhere has backlines. As for practicing, we're going to get a few in once we're over there. We have a few days there before the first show. Luckily we've played all of our songs a lot, so hopefully those practices will go fast and we can just have more hang out time in Japan.

MRR: Alright, one last thing. Am I wrong in thinking one of you guys plays barefoot? I could have sworn I saw a pic of a live set and one of you was barefoot.

Kris: How dare you. We are not the Grateful Dead. Filthy hippies!

Jim: You have insulted my honor and the honor of my close friends.

All Boilerman releases can be found at boilerman.bandcamp.com.

LUBRICANT

Australian Tour Diary

Text by Tessa Tribe
Band photos by Tessa Tribe
Live photos by Denholm Lappas

In autumn of 2016, the Singaporean hardcore band Lubricant embarked on their first overseas tour around Australia. This was the first tour I'd booked for an international band and my first tour driving...having only gotten my full license by the skin of my teeth a few weeks prior to its start!

The proportion of Southeast Asian bands touring Australia is dismally minimal considering the torrent of sometimes established and half-arsed holiday bands from Australia that have toured Southeast Asia in the past. Although the imbalance in this exchange was already obvious, the recent DIY punk documentary The Other Option (highly recommended!) really cemented to me that something needed to change. Obviously there are some pretty monumental road blocks put in place thanks to the good ol' fashioned racism of Australian border protection and immigration on top of the obvious geographical wealth disparity Australians experience comparative to Southeast Asians in self-funding tours. Since 2012, only three punk bands from Southeast Asia have toured Australia, but technically really only two, as Kontrasocial from Indonesia were denied visas for their 2014 tour thanks again to the bastards in Australian immigration. Compare this to American or European bands, both of which we are quite geographically removed from, but who we have the chance to see touring every other weekend.

I met Hafiz, the singer of Lubricant, when he toured Australia with his other Finnish-style punk band Vaarallinen. After a visit to Malaysia and Singapore in 2015, I met Wall, the guitarist of Lubricant, and flagged in my mind later that year that bringing their new tough as fuck catchy hardcore band to Australia would be my goal of 2016. With big plans for the tour, Rick and Isabella from NGM Records & Screen Printing in Brisbane agreed to help me out, asking Lubricant to headline Total Attack, the annual festival they were putting on in Brisbane. Without these two certified legends, this tour would not have been possible.

April 28th, Melbourne

The tour started with a very white-knuckled and anxious wait at Melbourne airport. With thoughts of the immigration nightmares all faced by Asian bands like Daighila and Disturd swirling through my head, when the boys hadn't emerged from customs, I was sure they'd been thrown in detention and the cops were on the way to arrest me. Perhaps it was the pre-first tour jitters, but when a parking attendant came to ask me to move my car, he asked if I was OK, as I was clearly having a bit of a meltdown. Two hours after their flight landed, the boys emerged a little bleary-eyed but all in one piece.

After faffing around and grabbing a bite to eat, we walked down High Street in Thornbury to pick up some equipment essentials. Antonis, the bass player of Lubricant, is originally from Greece and moved to Singapore for work. According to him, there was almost no Greek community in Singapore and he had been missing home. Melbourne, particularly the northern suburbs where we were, has a huge and vibrant Greek community—the largest outside of Greece, in fact. Walking down High Street, Antonis got pretty excited walking past lawyers, social clubs, and cafes where everything was written in Greek, having little chats with nonnas and poppas tending their gardens, and sitting in cafes. It was adorable. I put the boys to work rolling t-shirts and assembling their tape that my label Lost in Fog put out for the tour. When I returned from running some errands, most of them had passed out, taking a well-deserved and strategic nap.

The first gig of the tour was kicking off at Bar Open, an awesome space in the heart of Melbourne's northern nightlife territory, Fitzroy. New brats on the block Spotting opened up the show, what I think was only their second or third show. Weird and fun live, they are an up and coming band to watch. Spotting was followed by cranky and distorted new three-piece Grotto and then the anarcho band Tol. Uncommon for a weeknight show in Melbourne, there was a large crowd and a big ol' pit for Lubricant's set. I managed to catch a punter's boot to the head after a surprise

crowd surf. The show was rowdy and we all enjoyed a well-earned kebab and falafel from the Greek takeaway next door, especially Antonis, who was very stoked on running into some more familiarities from home.

April 29th, Melbourne

DIY venues in Melbourne these days are few and far between, and by few and far between I mean there is literally only one left short of squatting a drain or warehouse for a one-night-only generator show. Hotshots is an amazing collective-run space in Melbourne's west that would easily rival that of the mega squat venues in Europe. It's a large venue and we spent the day hanging out, playing ping-pong, and setting up. The show catered to a crustier crowd this time: it was messy, late, and a roaring good time, as it always is at Hotshots. Southeast Asian regulars Scab Eater opened up to a rowdy crowd, their first show back in Australia after the singer had finally been allowed entry back into the country after visa troubles. They were followed by my band Masses and crusty good timers Extinct Exist. Finnish-style punks Havittajat finished up after Lubricant. Perhaps I'm biased as a Melbournian, but this was definitely one of the most fun shows on tour. Lubricant dove in and took in the full experience of Australia's overpriced alcohol and all got a tad sloshed...which would come back to bite us in the arse later in the night when James, my partner and bandmate, had the cymbals he'd loaned to Lubricant stolen right in front of us as we loaded gear at the end of the night. Starting a trend that would become a theme throughout the tour, we overloaded the car. For some reason, every time we did, poor Azril, the drummer and tallest member of Lubricant, would always end up with his head shoved down at everyone's feet so as not to attract the attention of cops. Drunkenly realizing we'd lost the brand new cymbals as we arrived home, we all passed out, dreading the knowledge we had to get up in four hours for the ten-hour drive to Sydney.

April 30th, Sydney

Bleary-eyed with a few hungover Singaporeans in tow, we made the always arduous journey to Sydney. I promised the boys we'd make stops to see all the "big" things Australian road tripping has to offer (literally giant versions of whatever that town or region is famous for). I missed the turn off to the Big Ned Kelly after talking up our local cop killing hero, we sauntered by the Big Dog on the Tucker Box and had a quick pit stop at the Big Merino Sheep, with its balls the size of a car. Hafiz and Antonis could also drive, but I think were more accustomed to the city streets of Singapore and other side of the road in Greece. After a trip to the wrong side of the road, I insisted I would drive the rest of the tour.

Sydney has recently gained a reputation for weird or underwhelming shows as well as struggling to find venues accessible for punk shows. This show had been plagued with difficulties that I grasped were not uncommon these days. The bar the show had been booked at very suddenly closed down just a week or so before the Lubricant show was meant to happen. Thankfully Dizzy (full-time legend, the booker of the show, and guitarist of Oily Boys) found a new venue in the eleventh hour: a new and untested place called the Portuguese Club. Not being from Sydney, I wouldn't know the exact causes, but from chatting to some locals it seemed the new government lock-out laws and sweeping gentrification were taking their toll on venues.

After the mammoth trek from Melbourne, we arrived at the venue greeted by lots of old adorable Portuguese couples dressed in their bests coming down from the dinner service as the show started. Later in the night some of the older club members could be seen cheerily videoing the show's crowd and taking selfies with some of the more colorfully dressed punters. The club itself was huge. The show was held downstairs in a huge padded and curtained room usually reserved as a karate dojo, but add a bit of mood lighting and you've got the perfect punk venue. New hardcore bands Robber and Rapid Dye opened the show followed by fem-fronted Nervous Habit. But Oily Boys really stole the show, as always. At the end of their set, Dizzy dropped his guitar and walked off mid-song, citing "I don't know how we keep getting shittier." Maybe it's because I'm always keen to see Oily Boys, but I thought their set was killer. People got moving in the pit for Lubricant; so much so one kid just wouldn't stop doing the worm. After initially having doubts, Sydney had far exceed my expectations, and after a quick pit stop for some Lebanese pizza, we Tetrised everyone into the car and retired back to our host Mishu's house.

May 1st, Sydney

Initially we had planned to attend the May Day march happening that day, but alas, we slept too late and fulfilled the age-old tradition of meaning well but going too hard the night before and miserably failing our comrades. Realizing a little too late that the show today was in fact an afternoon show and not in the evening, we raced off to make it to the venue in time. A more powerviolence and hardcore focused show this time, we piled into the long time staple home of punk in Sydney, Blackwire Records. I cannot say enough nice things about this place; it's hard to have a bad time there. The show was surprisingly less mellow than I had expected for an afternoon show on a Sunday and much to my dismay I ended up as the human barrier between a display case and some very hyped Lubricant fans. So far the tour had been 100% shows and driving, so I figured maybe it was time to load the boys up with some more bona-fide touristy shit. After the show, we inhaled some laksa and sat on the steps of the Sydney Opera House admiring the view of the harbor.

May 2nd, Newcastle

Continuing the theme of cheesy touristy stuff, on our way out of Sydney, Hafiz "suggested" (insisted) we stop off at the water tower where the most recent Royal Headache album cover was taken, an album the boys had thrashed to death throughout the tour. Not being from Sydney, I didn't know many of the hot spots, so on our way out I took them to the only nice spot I knew: Waverly Cemetery. The spot boasted a huge sloping cemetery dating back to the 1800s perched on a cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. After the refreshingly short drive to Newcastle through the mountain pass, we arrived at the Croatian Club in Newcastle. Like the Portuguese Club, the Croat, as it's affectionately known, is a social club mostly for the elderly Croatian residents of the area. It's run by a sweet old man Pavo and his wife, who have always been welcoming of the punk scene in Newcastle. The show was obviously smaller than the larger capital city shows Lubricant had just played, but it full of energy and a very welcoming crowd. As would become clear on this tour, smaller cities and towns in Australia have some of the most enjoyable shows. Often left off the tour circuit of international bands, Newcastle was very worthwhile, and nothing beats seeing the always incredible Obat Batuk play.

May 3rd, day off

With grand plans to get up early and drive up the gorgeous scenic New South Wales pacific coastline, the hopes of swimming in crystal blue waters were very quickly dashed when I woke up with literally the worst food poisoning I have ever had. I've had gastro before, and I've had food poisoning before at home and abroad, but nothing compared to how fucked up I was by this sickness. We're talking like "waking myself by vomiting on myself" sick. Not my finest hour. Wall and Edo, our gracious host and the guitarist of Obat Batuk, whirled me off to the doctor who told me to go to hospital to get rehydrated. On a soppy side note, I don't think there are many bands that whilst on tour would dote and take care of one very vomity and cranky tour organizer, but I am forever thankful that the boys looked after me so well.

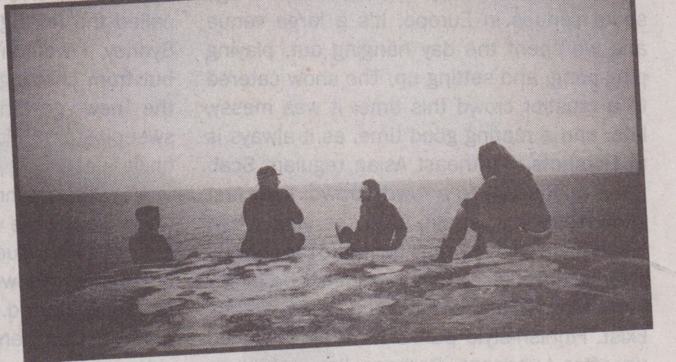
May 4th, Lismore

Fast forward through a day and night of me sleeping and vomiting and we had to hit the road to make it to our next show in the coastal farming town of Lismore. Still too sick to do anything, Hafiz took the wheel and saved the day by getting us to the venue on time. Lismore is surrounded by gorgeous forest, green pastures, and warm beaches. The scene is very small and essentially held together by a core group of people, most of who play in the band Common Enemy. A fierce, fem-fronted D-beat band, Common Enemy are reminiscent of New York's Nausea with a heavy focus on political issues in Australia. Their line-up features a new drummer Araus (originally from the Indonesian band Black Boots) and they were super tight and a huge step up from the last time I saw them. Proving small cities can hold their own, the show was well-attended and super fun. Initially I had booked it as a stop over to break up the drive from Sydney to Brisbane, but Lismore surprised me with the quality of the supports and the show. Dominating the line-up was a female presence I hadn't expected from a smaller scene, with new fem-fronted band Masochist also killing it that night.

May 5th–8th:
Total Attack Festival in Brisbane

So I'm not going to lie... this weekend is a bit of a blur now. Personally my favorite fest in Australia, Total Attack has become a staple of the Australian punk scene with diverse line-ups and a guaranteed raucous good time. This was the second year the festival had been run as a fundraiser, with 100% of the profits going to the Asylum Seekers Resource Center, an incredibly deserving cause considering the current political climate in Australia. Initially the festival was meant to be held at a bowls club of some sort in an effort to keep the festival 100% all ages accessible, but as is the way with punk, the venue committee pulled the plug just weeks before kick off.

We had spent most of Thursday swimming in the turquoise waters of Byron Bay, a hotspot coastal town on the way to Brisbane. This was the first day I hadn't been puking my guts out since Newcastle and floating in the sun soaked ocean whilst knowing it was freezing back home in Melbourne was a pretty good feeling. Arriving at the show on Friday, the Beetle Bar had an amazing set up. Despite it being a licensed venue, Rick had cordoned off the upper level of the bar just for all ages attendees, with the larger stage below still viewable from upstairs. We set up camp downstairs at the merch table

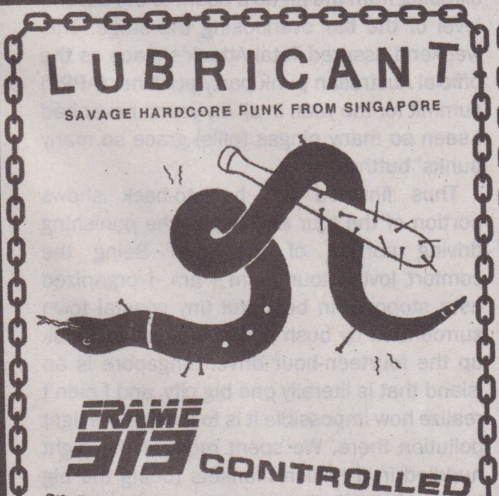


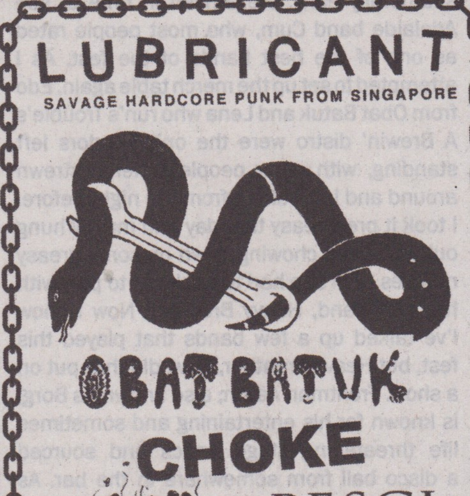
and the boys dispersed. At one point we thought we'd lost Azril for good when he disappeared with Nathan, guitarist of Scab Eater, for god knows how long. We had rushed to make the first few bands, however one of my Melbourne favorites Stations of the Cross, had to pull out due to medical reasons. Luckily Newcastle favorites Obat Batuk brought up

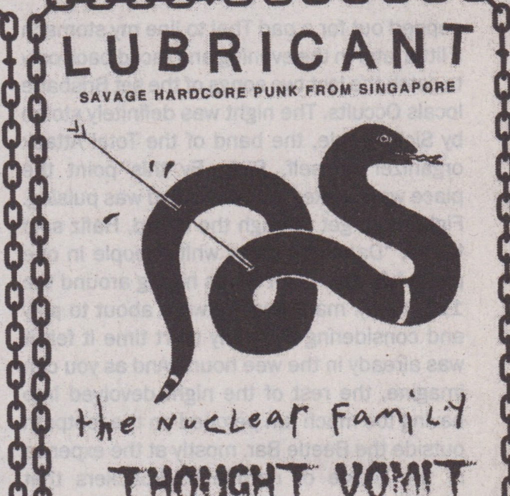
the rear, masks and all, and played a killer set. Other highlights for the night were New Zealand via Melbourne Oi! band No Class, and actual New Zealand D-beat band Rogernomix, who were kicking off their Australian and South East Asian tour at the fest. Man, they were killer! Aotearoa bands are criminally underrepresented outside of New Zealand, so do yourself a favor and check out Rogernomix. Blistering fem-fronted D-beat that'll make you wanna kiwi stomp all over the place.

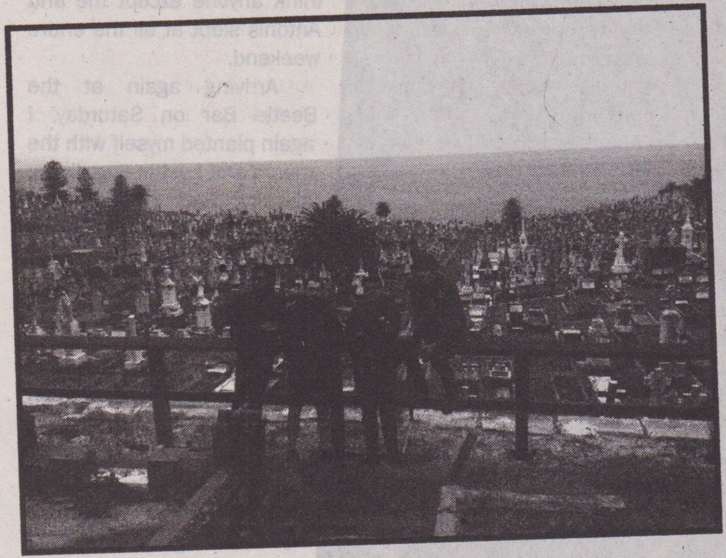
We retreated back to our host Will's beautiful Queenslander style house and shot the shit long into the night. I don't know how they did it, but to my knowledge I don't think anyone except me and Antonis slept at all the entire weekend.

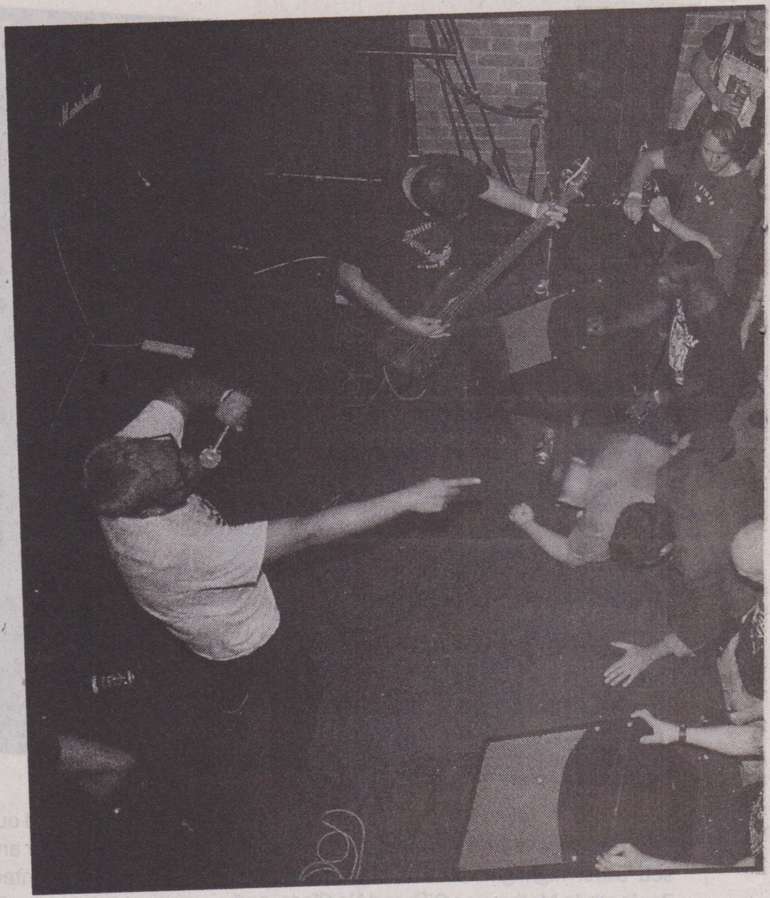
Arriving again at the Beetle Bar on Saturday, I again planted myself with the merch and Lost In Fog distro, chatting and drinking with my neighbors. Tonight was definitely the party night. The bands started early, around 2 p.m. We didn't even make the beginning and arrived just in time to see new (but actually been around forever...) crust band Territory from Perth. Territory were a bit of a Perth all-star band featuring members of Drowning Horse, People Problem, and Warthreat. I had been looking forward to seeing these guys for a while. Heralded as the bringer of the dexys, Luke from Territory saved the day for us and possibly broke Azril's brain when he went way too hard on them and eventually started to resemble a hummingbird. After discovering one of the bartenders was a bit impartial to giving away free drinks, the rest of the night got a little fuzzy. I do remember the highlights: Lubricant of course played a killer set; Ironhawk did not disappoint, delivering the blistering motor-charged Tasmanian punk they're known for. I











popped out for a pad Thai to line my stomach a little later in the evening and raced back only to catch the last two songs of the set Brisbane locals Occults. The night was definitely stolen by Sick People, the band of the Total Attack organizer himself, Rick. By this point the place was packed and the crowd was pulsing. Fighting to get through the crowd, Hafiz said to me, "Damn, so many white people in one place." By this point it was hitting around the 11:00 p.m. mark and Tol were about to play and considering the early start time it felt it was already in the wee hours. And as you can imagine, the rest of the night devolved into having too much fun perched on the footpath outside the Beetle Bar, mostly at the expense of the trickle of normie backpackers that were forced to weave their way through the crowd of punks.

Sunday was...as Sundays at festivals usually are. We attempted to arrive for the first band, Carnal Urge, featuring my friend Mark from Shackles. Much unlike himself, Mark was apparently nowhere to be found. He mysteriously never showed up, so I guess they never played. We also missed Brisbane's finest weirdo band, Unpeople, who also played shamefully early. We arrived in time to see Adelaide band Cum, who most people rated as one of the best bands of the fest. As I attempted to set up the merch table again, Edo from Obat Batuk and Lena who run's Trouble's A Brewin' distro were the only vendors left standing, with other people's merch strewn around and left behind from the night before. I took it pretty easy that day and mainly hung out with Lena chowing down on some greasy noodles until she had to duck out to play with her new band, Heavy Breather. Now I know I've talked up a few bands that played this fest, but Heavy Breather, wow, did they put on a show. Frontman Aaron; also known as Borg, is known for his entertaining and sometimes life threatening stage antics and sourced a disco ball from somewhere in the bar. As the band proceeded to pump out their own brand of catchy hardcore, he whipped the ball around like it was some kind of shiny planet orbiting his sweaty head. Needless to say it was very entertaining.

The Lubricant boys seemed quite nervous to be finishing out the festival and headlining on a Sunday night. It was daunting to be playing a second time at the fest and on the Sunday night after a big weekend. Maybe it's an Australian thing, but the hangovers in the room seemed to disappear by the evening, ending with some very loose punks and Lewis from No Patience nearly breaking his neck climbing from the pit up a beam to the second level of the bar overlooking the stage. This weekend assured Total Attack's place as the official Australian punk party punisher (APPP) summit for the year. In all my years, never had I seen so many pingas (pills) grace so many punks' buttholes.

Thus finished the back-to-back shows portion of the tour and began the punishing driving portion of the tour! Being the comfort loving tour mum I am, I organized us a stopover in beautiful tiny coastal town surrounded by bush called Wooton to break up the fourteen-hour drive. Singapore is an island that is literally one big city, and I didn't realize how impossible it is to escape the light pollution there. We spent most of the night huddled in a million blankets (being the big bunch of city slickers we were, we didn't have the foresight to light a fire) stargazing at a night sky that most of them had never seen before, smoking and talking shit.

May 11th, Wollongong

I was unsure whether to write about my true feelings of Wollongong. Initially I had planned

to play Canberra on this day, however it fell through and Rick suggested Wollongong, a city of similar size and scene instead. Personally, I'd never been to Wollongong, and honestly didn't think of it as an option because I fell into the usual trap that I haven't seen many other bands tour there so didn't pay any mind. On top of that, Wollongong, or at least some of the punks there, had gained quite the reputation after an incident affectionately named Scabgate. For the full explanation of that hoo-ha, you'll have to go back to the Scab Eater interview in issue #393 of MRR. Putting aside the fallout of Scabgate and the actual incident, which involved a bottling from some local punks for a visiting band, I wondered and worried what the vibe might be like. I had pictured the venue to be a run-down pub or RSL of sorts, with bogan (Australian rednecks) street punk types being the primary attendees. Serves me right for being such a judgmental urbanite, because I was way off the mark. We arrived just as the show was starting and was instantly welcomed by Jai, the booker of the show. The venue, the Rad Bar, was an amazing little nook with a tiny bar area and gallery-style set up for the band room. The crowd was a good mix of young misfit kids with nothing to do on a weeknight and older punks, with surprisingly more women than I expected. I was manning the merch all night, so I missed a lot of the supports, but I did catch a bit of Morte Lenta's set, a new fem-fronted band from Sydney with Portuguese vocals that made the trip down to Wollongong to play their first set. They were a breath of fresh air into the Australian scene and I look forward to hearing more from them. A local guy who ran Music Farmers Records, a local record store in Wollongong, housed us for the night, and like the arsehole I am I've forgotten his name, but he was super lovely and showed us a great time, promptly squashing my preconceptions of Wollongong punks.

We attempted to rise early the next day because our next show was in Adelaide...a sixteen-hour drive away. At Total Attack, Lewis from No Patience, who was booking the Adelaide show, told me some of the horror stories about driving this long leg from Adelaide towards Sydney. Like the time Christina Pap (AKA MRR columnist Blow Blood) hit a kangaroo going full speed down the highway in the dead of night driving thee Nodes, or when Emil from Hank Wood and the Hammerheads was "making great time" going 140km hydroplaning down the highway in the rain. Somehow what I got out of that talk was drive really fast, but not in the rain, and don't hit a 'roo! Needless to say this train of thought did not serve me well. Let me summarize the next two days of tour: Smoking, desert, lots of wheat fields, desert, smoking, night time, lots of fucking giant trucks, smoking, $500 fucking speeding ticket, lots of giant fucking kangaroos running in front of us, roadkill, smoking, stay the night in Mildura. Next day, an equal amount of smoking, lots of fruit plantations, desert, desert, river!, more fucking giant trucks trying to kill us, driving the speed limit this time, ADELAIDE!

May 13th, Adelaide

I have never been so damn happy to get to Adelaide. No, I mean it, and I really hate Adelaide, so this was literally the happiest I'd ever been to see the city of churches. Normally cynical towards this western city, I could've kissed the asphalt I was so happy to be out of that car. We pulled up to the punk stronghold, Animal House, a staple DIY venue in Adelaide for the past few years. We hung out and played some Nintendo 64, ate candy, and stretched our legs before heading to the show at a basement venue on Adelaide's main nightlife strip. The venue was perfect, dingy, and intimate. Cum, who had thoroughly impressed me at Total Attack, supported and played another super fun set. Lubricant played their last set, made all the sweeter when a random punter off the street draped an Adelaide Crows football scarf around Hafiz's neck, which he proceed to use as a noose of sorts. The set was bittersweet. The tour had been so much fun and run so smoothly that it was sad to see them smash out "Too Slow" for the last time. Hafiz was staying another week in Australia, but Wall, Azril, and Antonis had a 6:00AM. flight back to Singapore the next morning. At Lewis's insistence the decision was made for pizza and all night karaoke. Perhaps the most memorable rendition was Will horrifying fellow attendees with his balaclava'd hardcore take on Judas Priest's "Breaking The Law." So maybe I was a little hasty to write Adelaide off so quickly, because despite my preconceptions, the last show of the Lubricant tour was a cracker.

Having had a little too much fun at the karaoke bar, I waved off three of the four Lubricant members as Will from Scab Eater drove off to take them to the airport, promptly doing a burn out and speeding off just to freak me out, that bastard.

Being my first time booking an international band's tour, of course I learnt a lot. Mainly that small cities and towns that people often skip for the larger cities can be a roaring good time and full of unique and quintessentially Australian experiences, which is great fun for international touring bands. Sure, it might not be everyone's cup of tea, and for sure Lubricant's brand of catchy aggressive hardcore is easily applicable in a small town or big city setting, but more bands local and international definitely need to give places like Lismore, Newcastle, and Wollongong a go.

It's easy, even in Australia, to get swept up in the hype of American and European bands, but we (and the rest of the world) should pay more attention to Southeast Asia. The region produces some of the best bands but is criminally underrepresented in touring and even in underground punk media. Do yourself a favor and investigate their scene—Lubricant are just one of the gems out of Singapore, let alone the region as a whole.

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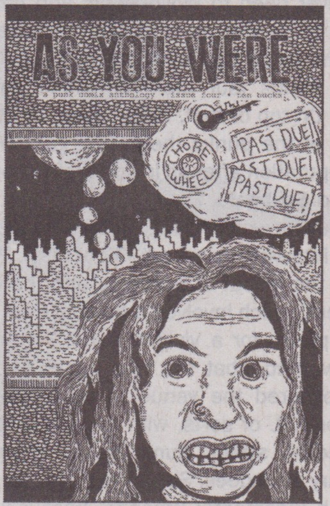

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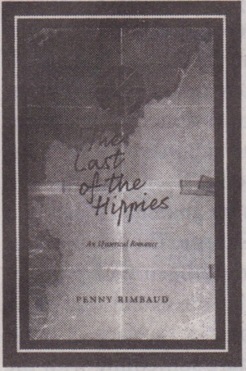


The Last of the Hippies
Penny Rimbaud
117 pgs / $12.00
PM Press
pmpress.org

The unlikely moment when a group of hippies who were fed up with the dying peace movement became punks is as beautiful as it is strange. That was the essence of Crass. When former art students squatting in a country cottage decided to jump into a growing music scene and get out their ideas, it worked. The band definitively moved punk outside of rock'n'roll and repopularized concepts that are still in play in Leftist social movements today.

The Last of the Hippies was part of that cultural innovation 30 years ago. Published in 1982 and distributed with Crass's *Christ the Album*, it must have been a strange read. It jumps between a non-violent Anarchist critique of the times and Penny Rimbaud's personal story of a dead friend named Wally Hope.

The political critique is really more of a rant than an argument, but it does a lot to win you over. Penny Rimbaud has a powerful political voice. He has a way of boiling down an idea to its essence that could make a presidential speechwriter cry. I realize this was a voice developed collectively, but it is crazy how much power it carries. It's hard to imagine the emotional effect these parts of the book may have had upon its release. Today, some of it is such standard sloganeering that it feels tired, but a lot of it still resonates. In that sense, this is some of the most innovative Anarchist propaganda ever created. Collective living, direct action…it's all here. I'm not saying this book did that single-handedly; I'm just saying it is interesting as a piece of that cultural moment that has grown into what it has become today.

Scattered between the non-linear political rant is the story of Wally Hope. And though it isn't the majority of the book, it is what makes the book worth reading beyond status as a cultural artifact. Wally Hope came up with the idea of the Stonehenge Concerts, where he brought bands like Hawkwind and the 101ers to play illegally at Stonehenge. He drove a rainbow colored car, came up with his own outsider theology, and, according to Rimbaud, once walked out of the bushes in the summer, did a dance, and, by magic, made it snow. He made it snow…in summer. Pause.

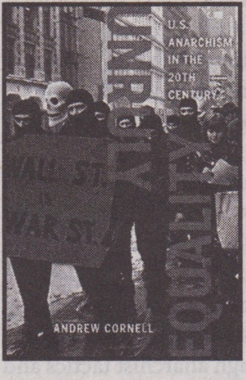
So, I did a little research on what other people had to say about this incident in George Berger's book about Crass. An alternate view of the summer snow dance was that Wally's weather miracle was nothing more than a strange coincidence: He was dancing to make it snow, and, coincidentally, it snowed in summer. Other people saw it happen! It is a pretty minor aspect of the story of Wally Hope, but I love the idea that there was disagreement over whether he was magic so much that I wish there was a whole chapter on it.

Magic aside, the short bit of the book that is about Wally Hope is really moving. He was arrested at one of his festivals, committed to a mental institution, and over-medicated to death. It's really tragic and sadly fit with everything Rimbaud speaks against in this book. And though Rimbaud alludes to conspiracy, psychiatry was still pretty barbaric at that time, so there didn't need to be one. He doesn't need conspiracy to explain an unethical system: the rules of power and how to treat someone like Wally were already in place, and that is where Crass will always be right.

Between the angry polemics and Native American proverbs, the most powerful passage in the book is about the enemies of friendship. It reads: "In the relatively short time we have on this earth we probably have contact with thousands of people with whom we share little more than half-smiles and polite conversation. We are lucky if amongst those thousands of faces one actually responds to us with more than predictable formalities. Real friends are rare. True understanding between people is difficult to achieve, and when it is achieved it is the most precious of all human experiences. I have been lucky in that I am part of a group of people whom I regard as friends and with whom I can share a sense of reality and work towards a shared vision of the future. Equally, I have met a few people who because of their own cynicism and lack of purpose appear to want to prevent people like ourselves from expressing our own sense of our own lives. I see people like that as the dark shadows that have made our world so colourless."

The idea that frightened people created a system to eradicate harmless difference and that that system killed someone's best friend is devastating. If you read this book as a desperate attempt to make sense of that tragedy, the disorder of the ideas start to make sense. There can't be another hippy after the death of Wally.

—Zane Grant



Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the 20th Century
Andrew Cornell
416 pgs / $24.95
Univerity Of California Press
ucpress.edu

Andrew Cornell's *Unruly Equality* does what it says it's going to do. It surveys American anarchist history from 1916 to 1972, a period between the Progressive Era and the massive social-political upheavals of the late '60s that is often thought to have been dormant for anarchist political organizing. Cornell's intervention is a fine-grained history of how anarchism changed from an extreme but significant political current peopled by tens of thousands of working-class European immigrants just

before the First World War to the middle-class, lifestyle-focused, almost self-consciously marginal anarchism that may be familiar to you from your local infoshop, free store, Food Not Bombs, or political hardcore band's reunion tour. Since the Alien and Sedition Acts made anti-state propagandizing a jailable offense during World War I, anarchist political activity has faced the kind of constant (if predictable) state repression that makes sustained participation in it seem at best foolish and at worst deeply personally dangerous. Such pressure engenders a tendency within these movements to forget how generations of prior anarchists organized as recently as ten years ago, much less a hundred years ago. It's easy to believe when you're a teenaged, zine-educated radical attending co-op meetings with people who are at most like thirty, that no one has ever grappled with how difficult it is to oppose absolutely fucking everything you've ever laid eyes on because the world is horrifying and no one has figured out another place to live. Perhaps the most valuable contribution that Cornell makes, then, is an ambitious stab at explaining how anarchist subculture and politics have come to look the way they do in the present tense.

Unruly Equality is an academic text: it grew out of Cornell's dissertation project in American Studies and is structured as a sturdy social history, replete with a hundred pages of footnotes and index. It is nonetheless entirely readable, and its academic nature manifests mostly in the volume of detail Cornell provides about the movements he describes. Because anarchism became so marginalized and difficult to practice after the World Wars, Cornell follows a movement that, at times, consisted of a few hundred people nationwide. There are moments when the amount of specificity provided can be overwhelming, but given the relative inattention paid to anarchism by historians and academics, I appreciate the thoroughness of Cornell's account. He traces the longstanding ideological tensions that have always structured anarchist movements (debates about violence, human nature, tactics, and organizational structures), offering helpful conceptual tools for anyone starting down the wild and weird path of anti-authoritarian politics in his thorough accounts of conflicting tendencies within anarchism through time.

I'll be honest here: I'm an anarchist, and this book was both especially interesting and sometimes uncanny in its descriptions of the kinds of challenges anarchists have faced over the years. Reading about, for example, anarchist beef with communists throughout the last hundred years felt at once comically familiar and hugely illuminating, as it provided a deep historical context for conflicts that are in fact ongoing. Like many who have become alienated from a tendency that was supposed to instrumentalize its members' alienation against a culture of state-legitimized violence, I find it difficult to grapple with the consistent (now more than a century old) foundering of the anarchist project.

Even so, because of anarchy's designation as a failed and constantly-failing project, the idea that anarchy has even been around for 100 years, much less doing the political work that Cornell details, was weirdly inspiring. Cornell makes a compelling case for the positive value of anarchist organizing outside the project of actually toppling the state by describing anarchist influences on myriad "New Left" social movements of the late sixties up through anarchist tactics and influence manifest in Occupy. He offers a book's worth of anarchist resilience in the face of constant repression. By treating anarchism as an object worthy of sustained academic inquiry, Cornell troubles the cultural habit of dismissing anarchy as "an ill-considered, youthful rebelliousness, rather than as a sophisticated theoretical tradition and international social movement" (10). In short, Cornell's history reminds the reader that anarchy matters, despite its many foibles, which, as it turns out, have complex histories of their own.

Because *Unruly Equality* covers the middle of the twentieth century, it doesn't describe the intersection of punk and politics in any great detail. The MC5 receives the most attention of any single band in the text due to its connections with Detroit's acid-soaked beatnik collective Trans-Love Energies and the White Panther Party (a non-Black revolutionary auxiliary to the Black Panther Party), whose platform declared that they were "total maniacs in the universe" whose goal was "cultural revolution through a total assault on the culture" (263). It's easy to dismiss such an assertion as naive in retrospect, and the tension between cultural strategies to foment revolution versus mass organizing or insurrectionary methods is well-described throughout the Cornell's book. Even so, after the MC5, punk would go on to provide a means for anarchist ideals and methods to spread throughout the U.S. and Europe. Though political punk is hardly the most robust or appealing subgenre of punk to my eye in 2016, all punk remains political. To the extent that punk fosters the creation of alternative institutions in the face of tepid corporatized mass culture, it continues to share something with the strand of anarchism that tries to enact (per the early anti-state IWW) "a new world within the shell of the old." And that matters. I'm not here to make a case for cultural anarchism or the political project of punk, but I will say that *Unruly Equality* is a thorough, readable introduction to these and plenty of other issues, one that I would recommend to anyone who gives a shit about destroying absolutely fucking everything. I know you're out there, and this book, more than anyone, is for you.

—Lyle Suxe

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

I'll admit I was a little skeptical about **Who Is Billy Bones?** Bones was the singer of first wave Los Angeles punk band the Skulls. The Skulls released one song back then, but recorded two. The other was released later. While both songs "On Target" and "Victims" are great, it still seems odd that someone from such a short-lived band would get his own documentary. **Who Is Billy Bones?** starts out with a bunch of talking heads spouting the virtues of Billy Bones. Most of them are fairly young and one of them is in Green Day. Everybody is interviewed in front of a Skulls poster. The film also utilizes cheesy titles with generic sounding music played over them. It is too much like a promotional film. However once **Who Is Billy Bones?** settles in and starts to tell the story, those aspects start to become less prominent.

Billy Bones was born Steven Fortuna in England. His dad was in the army so the family moved around a lot. After England they went on to Germany then Kansas and Maryland. As a teenager Fortuna discovered music and started to become more rebellious. Against his father's wishes he became a conscientious objector to avoid fighting in Vietnam. Then he headed off to Los Angeles.

While in LA, Bones is asked to join the Skulls. As I mentioned they recorded two songs during their first run. There is no footage of the band playing live, just some photographs. Not even a third of the way into **Who Is Billy Bones?**, the Skulls are no more. Always an odd thing to happen in a film when you think that is what the story is.

Fortunately, Bones doesn't simply OD or crash his motorcycle. During his early punk days he meets his wife. They are still married. He forms another band, Martini Ranch, which ends contentiously so he gives up on playing music. He focuses on his family and other pursuits until '70s punk nostalgia hits and he reforms the Skulls for a Masque reunion show. Although all of this sounds rather ordinary, it is surprisingly interesting. It is not often that there is a somewhat positive story from punk's past. Everyone (including myself) enjoys hearing about the tragedies so it is strangely fascinating to hear the story of someone who survived. Even after reforming the Skulls and releasing new albums with the new line-up, Bones does what many punks can't. He stops living off the punk nostalgia and changes the band's name to the Billy Bones.

Who Is Billy Bones? includes something most punk documentaries choose to ignore. It discusses being an aging punk. While that seems like something obvious it is usually avoided in favor of reflecting fondly on the good old days. Although it doesn't get far beyond acknowledging that punks get old, at least it does. It is a refreshing perspective. (colakat.com)

The music business is so horrible that it is amazing anyone wants to be involved. Of course, most people don't know just what they are getting into until they are in the midst of it. Jimmy Ellis had one of the stranger experiences. Luckily for us **Orion: The Man Who Would Be King** tells his remarkable story.

Jimmy Ellis was the adopted son of farmers in Mississippi. Ellis himself excelled at breeding horses. However, he loved singing and was very good at it. He gave up his farming to make it as a singer. He moved to Los Angeles. After spending all his money with no success, he returned home. He kept at it and eventually got signed to Sun Records. Unfortunately for Ellis, he sounded too much like Elvis Presley. No one was interested in hearing records from another Elvis. They already had one.

When Presley died in 1977, Sun Records owner Shelby Singleton did something that was both horrible and ingenious. He began to promote his Elvis sound-a-like singer as a mysterious personality. First he didn't include Ellis' name on records, insinuating that the recordings are possibly unreleased Elvis tracks. Then he named the singer as Orion Eckley Darnell. The character Orion was from a novel about a rock'n'roll singer who faked his own death. It was written before Presley died, but combined with the appearance of a new singer whose voice so closely resembled Elvis's, the deception was on.

Orion always wore a mask. Although some fans point out that it was obvious he wasn't Elvis, others either believed it or just wanted to. His popularity began to grow. Eventually the sham success got to be too much for Ellis. His ego took over and he needed to be famous as himself. Of course it doesn't work out that well. (orionthemovie.com)

A friend recently told me a story about how his dad financed a trip to Australia by recycling cans. It is hard to believe there could be that much money in it, but apparently there is. **Dogtown Redemption** is the story of a few recyclers in Oakland, CA. Although the story starts out somewhat upbeat, exclaiming that people can make money by recycling trash, it devolves into tales of drugs, death, and uptight neighbors.

The recyclers in **Dogtown Redemption** work hard. There is no denying it. Scouring trash cans and dumpsters for recyclable materials is neither easy nor pleasant. Each personal story is heartbreaking. Miss Kay was the drummer for punk polka band Polkacide in the '80s. Now she eats from garbage cans and gets truly excited by drinking an Olde English 800. Another recycler, Jason Witt is a champion recycler who seemingly manages to get things in order by getting off the street and into a house with his girlfriend. Later the place is so overrun with trash the couple is forced out on the street again. Luckily one person has an uplifting story. Landon Goodwin receives some help from a cousin in Vallejo, CA, and gets his life back on track. Then he begins to work with his fellow recyclers to help them.

After having to deal with complaints from new people moving into the neighborhood and City Council hearings regarding these complaints, Alliance Metals (the recycling center at the center of **Dogtown Redemption**) is scheduled to close in August 2016. I will never understand someone who moves into a new building without checking out the neighborhood first. If you hate noise, you don't move in above a bar. If the sound of rattling shopping carts on the street bothers you, don't move in across the street from a recycling center. It's common sense. (dogtownredemption.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com.

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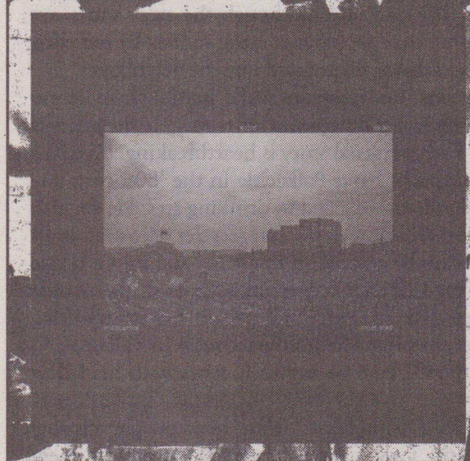

GO WHITE BRONCO
***POPULATION: GHOST TOWN* LP**
Five years in the making, *Population: Ghost Town* is the first LP from Long Island lifer-band Go White Bronco. A lineup of musicians culled from 20-year collaborators and friends from local bands like Iron Chic, Fellow Project, Deep Pockets, Splurge, and Ancient Tongue, this nine track debut full length is a mostly bleak, sometimes triumphant existential meditation led by three acoustic guitars and soaring multi-part harmonies. Crosby, Stills, Hash, and Old.

BOILERMAN
***FEEL WAYS ABOUT STUFF* LP/CD**
With four EPs, an LP, and a slew of cassettes and compilations released since their 2010 demo, Boilerman has played over 170 shows across the US and Canada. The band's sophomore full length is 12 new songs using a sonic pallet drawn as much from bands like Leatherface and Articles of Faith as it is contemporaries like Canadian Rifle, Tenement, and Witches with Dicks. The album is rounded out by a faithful cover of The Mice's 1986 "Not Proud Of The USA" and illustrations by Shannon Thompson.

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RECORDS

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(WK) Will Kinser
(WN) Robert Collins

ACTIVE MINDS – "The Storm Before The Calm" EP
I've known this logo for years but I've sadly never checked out this old school band from the UK. I admit the aesthetic had me expecting something much more hardcore. ACTIVE MINDS is, however, heavy political pop punk with a strong melody and a passionate message. There is a New Wave synth flavor to this recording as well with hints of power ballad metal. I mean that not in a butt-rock way, but in a lighter-in-the-air way. With regard to the more accessible spectrum, this EP is for fans of PROPAGANDHI or ARCTIC FLOWERS. The heaviness is reminiscent of '90s crust from FLEAS & LICE or GUTSPIE EARSHOT. The drumming is choppy but romantic. The vocals are clear, impressively full of lyrics, and powerful. Very catchy, this is a feel-good positive punk EP released during some of the darkest times I've been around for. Chin up and fists in the air from ACTIVE MINDS. (JR)
(Loony Tunes)

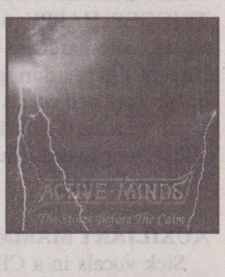
AK//47 – "Verba Volant, Scripta Manet" CD
From Indonesia, AK//47 absolutely levels us with some non-stop, souped-up bulldozer grind. This one is probably way too metal for most *MRR* readers, but I fucking love it! Owing more to old school death metal than anything else, they make me think of cartoon gore splattered album covers and my terrified parents. Fortunately, these guys have way better lyrical themes than any of those bands, focusing on radicalism and insurrection rather than blood and Satan. If you think you might like to try some metal, why not these dudes? (BA)
(Resting Hell / Vitus)

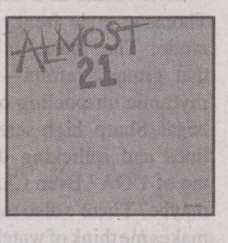
ALARIC – "End of Mirrors" LP
I first saw this band drunk as shit at First Church of The Buzzard in Oakland. It was a transcendental record release. I picked up their split with ATRIARCH and I'm lucky it made it home. I'm lucky I made it home. The music struggles and plods through darkness until the vocals arrive and tear open the song. If I were standing on the edge of a building, I might reconsider my flight due to the optimism that this LP brings forth with its anarcho-punk inspiration. But it's also the kind of album that got me up there in the first place. Vibes of TUBEWAY ARMY with the terse tones and wild riff journeys of later RUDIMENTARY PENI. This is a goth rock album for those who twitter between the doom drone and death punk rock machine. All the KILLING JOKE bitterness with NEW MODEL ARMY bright spots, so bittersweet. (JR)
(Neurot)

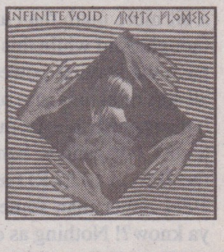
ALMOST 21 – "Drowning in the Rug" EP
More SoCal beach punk unearthed, endless summer indeed. ALMOST 21 were a short-lived OC band outta Fullerton featuring a young Alfie Agnew and future D.I. members, circa 1982–84. Nothing earth-shattering—high schoolers emulating their big brothers' bands, has that frantic melodic almost gothic OC beach punk sound o' suburbia. If this is your shit then you are prolly fuckin' stoked. Myself, I can maybe handle one TSOL dose a year. Cool packaging with full color photo collage spread and band history. (GB)
(Gummopunx)

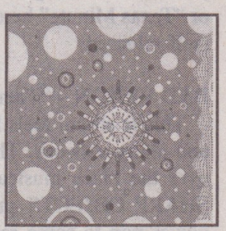
ANTI-STATE CONTROL – "Glue Sniffing Blues" EP
More filthy lucre from the vaults of punk rock history! This re-issue of a 1984 UK obscurity (apparently most copies of the original pressing were destroyed in a fire!) will appeal equally to fans of the UK punk and DIY scenes, as it joins the piss and venom of early punk to the shambolic, amateurish sound of a *Messthetics* comp band. This definitely would have sounded dated in '84, as only the title track reflects the speed and harshness of the contemporary UKHC scene. The two songs on the flip are out of time, tottering plodders with minimal distortion that hint at an anarcho-punk influence without lifting significantly from any particular band. The vocals definitely recall Dick Lucas, but it's more an issue of accent and articulation than delivery. The graphic design is fucking great, an all-time punk classic from the hand-drawn ransom note-style band logo to the lengthy news article included on the sleeve recounting an incident where a glue-sniffing teen murdered his grandmother. The re-issue expands the sleeve into a four-panel fold-out with a brief history of the band and some nice photos of the band looking punk as fuck (a couple show the band either practicing or performing in someone's rather posh living room). (AU)
(Vomitopunkrock)

ARCTIC FLOWERS / INFINITE VOID – split EP
Post-punk collaboration between Melbourne and Portland, each band contributing one track. A shared trait between these bands is that they both sound like they are drinking









from the SKELETAL FAMILY fountain. This is the first I'm hearing of INFINITE VOID from Australia and they have grabbed my interest. Their dreamy goth sound reminds me of FLOWERS AND FIRE and I like it more with each listen. This is the eighth or so release for Portland's ARCTIC FLOWERS who, along with SPECTRES and COMPLICATIONS, were part of the first wave of dark post-punk revival in North America. Anyone remember 2006, the last year we had to endure before the emergence of new post-punk? Cool split, I just wish it had more songs. (LT)
(Contraszt! / Mass Media / Poison City)

AUDIO VISCERAL – "Cildce Bihaver" CD
Album pronounced "Childish Behavior," this Canadian trio plays pop punk with a sense of humor. Vets of the Canadian scene with former members of BENDER, the ALMIGHTY TRIGGER HAPPY, and HEADCRAMP. Toes the melodic hardcore line as well. This would have fit right in during the '90s. Lots of peppy guitar work and vocals that have a bit of a Darby Crash quality. Think Dr. Strange records circa 1995. Done to death but done well here. (RL)
(Sudden Death)

AUXILIARY MAMMALS – LP
Sick vocals in a CIRCUS LUPUS-era Chris Thomson style frenzy, unhinged and in attack mode. The music is definitely informed by that group's refrain—it has that wild circular rhythmic unspooling of what SCRATCH ACID begat. Sharp, high-scree guitar over kinetic bass lines and rollicking drums that kinda remind me of UOA? Even CLIKATAT IKATOWI style maybe? There's also this weird tribal feeling that makes me think of watching NEUROSIS play. It's a bit more math than any of the aforementioned though. And while this is a cool listen, it doesn't have the staying power of CIRCUS LUPUS. It all sort of blends into one and the songs feel a bit indistinguishable from each other. Sounds like a cool but generic band that woulda supported the JESUS LIZARD and had one 45 on C/Z in 1994 rather than something you would kill for, ya know?! Nothing as devastating as "Pop Man" or "Texas Minute" here. (LG)
(self-released)

BAD VISION – "Turn Out Your Sockets" LP
This is album feels long and has a dull name and shitty artwork. They're Australian and all over the place musically, varying from snotty SHARP OBJECTS punk to MARKED MEN power pop to some radio friendly college rock sounding material. They know how to write a song and having a style that's not so easy to label is not a bad thing. Unfortunately, this starts out well and fades into blandness. There's nothing I can really bite into except for a few inklings of danger that don't really pan out. (RO)
(Adagio830)

ALICE BAG – LP
This is the debut solo effort of ALICE BAG, famously of the BAGS (if you do not know this group, please figure it out). It's extremely slick, taking a weird ride through pop to punk to ballads. The best tracks take cues from the likes of the MARVELETTES or the SUPREMES, combining wall of sound style with straightforward feminist lyrics. It dips further into punk here and there. One song ("Modern Day Virgin Sacrifice") sounds like it could have easily been a lost BAGS track. The recording is clean and pro—while this works for the songs with total pop leanings, the teeth of the punk tracks get lost within the production. ALICE BAG has a belter of a voice and she even manages to sound like AMY WINEHOUSE at points. I would have written this off if it wasn't ALICE BAG, but it stands as a demonstration of an elder punk continuing to push themselves to make new and relevant work. Also it just sounds like she's having such a great time—it's so cool. (MM)
(Don Giovanni)

APATIA – "Demo 1990" LP
According to the liner notes, this basement recording from long-running Polish hardcore band APATIA has never officially been released until now, though in the early '90s it made the rounds on bootleg cassettes also featuring two founding members' previous ensemble, HCP. The cover art depicting a bold black "X" behind a drawing of an angry skinhead, not to mention the photo inside of the shirtless, finger-pointing singer, just scream East Coast sXe circa 1989, but musically this has far more in common with other raw, aggressive European bands of the era than it does with, say, TURNING POINT. Maybe it's just the recording quality, but the vocalist's growling delivery has a real rough edge (no pun intended), even when he's singing lyrics like "*Positive state of consciousness / A system of total love*" or "*Coffee and tea / Will make you a junkie*" (translated from Polish, of course—the latter from the song "Pijesz Herbatę Bo Jesteś Słaby," or "You Drink Tea Because You're Weak"). While these eleven tracks have their share of full-bore blasts, they're most effective when the band downshifts into a heavy, repetitive, mid-tempo riff, as on the lumbering "Związane Ręce," and doesn't let up. You're sure to have that one stuck in your head for days. Nice job by the label here assembling a big booklet featuring lyrics and a new interview with the four members (all in both Polish and English), plus an old interview from *QQRYQ* fanzine and a ton of photos. The LP is pretty limited, too, only 330 copies. (CS)
(Refuse)

BARCELONA – "Pueden Ser Ellos" EP
BARCELONA made the record of 2015 to these ears and the follow-up continues in the same utterly broken mold: repetitive, jarring riffs that violently throw you out just as you finally settle in, a vocalist of unparalleled ferocity and fury, and snareless, unhinged drumming. It's the ugliness of QLOAQA LETAL, FIRMEZA 10 pushed even further in the red, as if DISCHARGE were refactored so you could hear with new ears just how strange that band truly is. Cover, center labels, and poster with art by drummer Oriol Roca, the damaged Jean Dubuffet of punk. Ugly music for ugly times. A must-own. (GA)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

BARRICADED SUSPECTS – "Trick Question" EP
No-frills Nashville hardcore. Breakdown-free for the most part, yet not quite at breakneck speed. At first spin it isn't as psychotic or destructive as I'd like, but maybe I'm just biased because the images on the sleeve are pixelated as hell. If a record's in an edition of 109, shouldn't it be easier to catch that kind of thing? Still, there's plenty to like here if you're in the mood for hardcore. "80 20" features some ripping and wild leads throughout, and the hint of the drummer tumbling out of control, the closest I got to a "you're moshing" moment. There's also a song entitled "Fuck This Shit World," which is impossible to not back. (EW)
(Closet Landscapes)

UNA BÈSTIA INCONTROLABLE – "10-11-12 Demo" 12"
This tape entirely blew apart my brains when it came out. Its rudimentary yet total power was devastating and real. It felt like a testament to the end of the world. An acerbic refutation and fuck you to capitalist degradation *and* the square mentality of what is possible within the constraints of "punk rock." Creative destruction, brutalist realism that doesn't feel like a lecture but rather an invitation to the apocalypse. This is my favorite recorded artifact of this group, a nihilistic totality that calls for a new reality, a new idea of what could be. This beautiful package transforms the humble cassette into a document of a scene with incredible artwork by Guillem and others. It's crazy that the original tape was put together after a few weeks of the band's existence and perhaps shows that maybe sometimes the most necessary groups occur in a mad haste because they have to exist. "We created it, let's take it over." Taking existent elements and transforming them to your own ends, a reconfiguration of what is possible out of the familiar tools of rudimentary hardcore punk. Every song on this feel necessary and intentional, no indulgence but wild experiments into what could be. (LG)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

BLATZ – "Mike Montano" LP
In 1992, BLATZ broke up and left behind a very small yet influential discography. *The Shit Split* with FILTH is a Bay Area hardcore treasure. Twenty-one years after breaking up, all six members of BLATZ reunited for one night only to play a benefit for their friend Mike from

FILTH, who was dying of cancer. This LP is the documentation of that night. The recording quality is incredible, but except for some very limited banter, this is essentially just the CD version of *The Shit Split* played live in a different order, minus one or two songs. Profits benefit 924 Gilman, so that can be an influence on whether or not you want to pick up this addition to the BLATZ oeuvre. (RH)
(Zafio)

THE BLUE PERIOD / HUMAN HANDS – split LP
HUMAN HANDS has yet to do wrong. If you miss '90s emo (STILL LIFE, EVERGREEN, etc) this is the current band to go to. The guitar is a little cleaner, with more twang than I recall from earlier stuff, but it works well. The first song is a louder, heavier one with desperately yelled vocals. The next three are prettier, with spoken or sung vocals. All are very good. The BLUE PERIOD is new to me. It's very late '90s Midwest indie/emo. It's pretty, kind of quiet, subdued, has great vocal harmonies, and it's reminiscent of VERY SECRETARY. This feels like something to go to sleep to and that isn't a bad thing. (PA)
(Barely Regal / Discos Finu / IFB / Ruined Smile / strictly no capital letters / Time as a Color / Wolf Town)

BOILERMAN – "Feel Ways About Stuff" LP
Boilerman feels like a new band but you'd never guess that based on their output. They play pop punk but it's much more on the punk side, like the way that CRIMPSHRINE played pop punk. While they often play faster than the aforementioned band, it has much of the same feel. It's gritty, the vocals are gruff (kind of screamed, kind of sung). The record has tons of energy. It's big but not slick. The music might not blow you away, but it sounds good. I'm not in love with their cover of "Not Proud of the USA" by the MICE, but I love the fact that they liked that song enough to cover it. (PA)
(All In Vinyl / 86'd / Sad Punk / Waterslide)

THE BRISTLES – "Don't Give Up" EP
Here's a well put-together reissue of an obscure 1983 five-song EP from primitive Swedish hardcore punk band the BRISTLES. Sonically the record is fantastic—driving UK82-sounding punk (somewhere between BLITZ and DISORDER) that still sounds fresh as a daisy. Throw in some raw artwork and song titles like "Punx and Skins" and "3rd World War" and you've got a winner. (AM)
(Threat From The Past)

BULGOGI – "Juan Dissed The Cyclops Baby" CD
Manic, with billions of tempo and genre changes coupled with a singer who can sound like a Teletubby, Michael Bublé, or Cookie Monster, and would absolutely love to demonstrate how many times he can flawlessly shimmy from one style to another. BULGOGI is this year's shittier version of MR. BUNGLE, only this time their influences seem to be screamy emo-metal, TINY TIM (this time I don't mean that as a compliment), and the TRANS SIBERIAN ORCHESTRA. It's gross and I don't want to hear it anymore. (DZ)
(self-released)

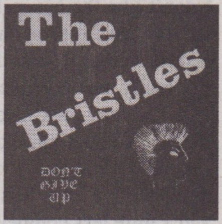
BULLNETTLE – LP
I'm a *huge* fan of THIS IS MY FIST and AMBITION MISSION, which are two of Annie's (BULLNETTLE guitar / vox) old bands from the past twenty (!!!) years. It's hard for me to review this without referencing those bands and stacking these new songs against that colossal legacy. Annie's familiar rasp and unfuckwithable knack for crafting a solid guitar hook are still there. Her fellow goat farmer bandmates (not an attempt at an insult...I think they were truly all goat farmers) Creech and Ian provide a solid backbone that adds so much more to each of the tracks. Throughout ten songs about the shittiness of humanity, animals, love, and a tear-inducing ode to the heartbreak of losing Stiles (the dog), this LP almost feels like the second album that THIS IS MY FIST never produced. It's a little older, wiser, and calmer, but no less fierce. I definitely had my doubts and fears, but that was pointless. (GH)
(Dirt Cult)

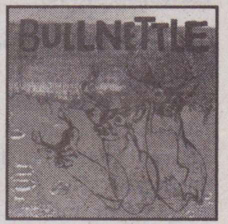
CCR HEADCLEANER – "Tear Down the Wall" LP
For the uninitiated, CCR HEADCLEANER are a gang of SF freaks boasting connections to the HOSPITALS and LIFE STINKS but operating in an impossible-to-chart, flailing, and freely punk way. Always debris-focused and cacophonous, *Tear Down the Wall* is their biggest sounding record to date (potentially most accessible, too), but their heavy and unique take on psych punk is more than welcome and legitimately fried. "Eat This Riff" cannot be denied, but the whole album challenges and just worms in on you. More off than just about anything else covered on the reg at *MRR*, but well worth your attention. Great stuff, really. (MC)
(In The Red)

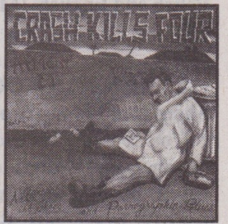
CHAOS TRIBE – "Manicomio" Flexi EP
This fucking slays!! The first thing mindless punkers that listen to this will think of is some Japanese noise punk like CONFUSE, but this isn't Osaka. This is Fresno, bitches, and this owes as much to SPK, THROBBING GRISTLE, and maybe even the BUTTHOLE SURFERS as it does to modern contemporaries like PIG DNA and MUTANT ITCH. The rumbling bass and electronic pulsating beat sucks you in from the get go jack and you'll be crying to your shitty mom begging for it to never end because nothing this good ever lasts, does it? (RO)
(Nightrider)

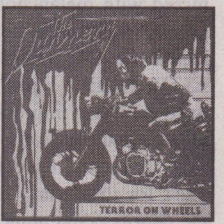
CIVIL UNION – "Seasick, Lovedrunk" LP
This is a supremely dour record of contemporary New Zealand goth/post-punk. It's a difficult listen at times—I'd recommend checking out their first tape before getting intimate with this doozy of a record. The sound consists of jittery rhythms providing some grounding for stabs of treble-heavy guitars, maybe recalling a more sedated BIRTHDAY PARTY, the looser feel of the early UNWOUND stuff, the desperate intonation of NIKKI SUDDEN's solo material. It's hard to think of a band even on the same hemisphere right now to which you could draw an easy comparison; maybe KITCHEN'S FLOOR with far less concision and compression, or GIRLS PISSING ON GIRLS PISSING without the emotional detachment. Lyrically it veers between the uncomfortably personal and high-concept flights of fancy (there's a track about L. Ron Hubbard's family life). A lot of these lyrics sound like the rants you don't want to hear from your casual drinking buddies after closing time: "*I could commit suicide / but it'd only please those I despise*." Things pick up a bit on the B-side with the most rocking track on the record (an anthem for dealing with public benefits officials). Hopefully you're ready to wallow in it. (EW)
(Melted Ice Cream)

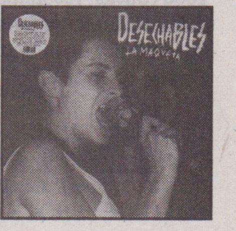
THE CONNIES – "The Way" LP
I've been burned a number of times by being too quick to judge an album by its cover. That doesn't stop me from











trying. I don't think I'm going to like this one. I don't like the cover. I don't even like the font they've used for the band name. Sometimes my instincts pay off, and this is one of those times. It's really not horrible, but I don't like it. It's sort of catchy rock'n'roll. It's up-tempo. It's just missing something, like a sense of urgency. It's kind of like if you took SLOPPY SECONDS, made them a little less punk, a little less funny, and a little less compelling. (KK)
(Relentless Greed)

THE CORPSE – "Curse Of the Living Corpse" LP

There have been a couple retrospective releases of this Polish hardcore/thrash band on LP and cassette, but this material is previously unreleased. The first side contains a pretty rough demo from '85 and is more in the vein of basic hardcore punk than the thrashier stuff I've heard from them. On the flip lies a session from two years later with added speed-picking, amateurish but shredding swarm-of-bees solos, and an overall faster pace. DEZERTER meets ACCÜSED. The last track is like VENOM on 45 (if it's supposed to be on 33 1/3) with a Polish hardcore vocalist. This LP has a few tracks but is mostly for completists. You also get a nice full-sized insert with cool band photos and lyrics in Polish and English. (MA)
(Warsaw Pact)

CRASH KILLS FOUR – "A Raincoat and Shoes and Pornographic Blues" LP

This record is as bad as the album name. Ex-members of various early '80s OC hardcore bands playing radio-ready music that draws heavily from '90s BAD RELIGION, minus the vocabulary, of course. You don't need this. (DG)
(Gummopunx)

CRIMINAL CODE – "Solitude/Days End"

Hailing from the great city of Tacoma, Washington, CRIMINAL CODE achieves a sound both familiar and hard to pin down. The best way I can describe their music is to say it's some form of '80s hardcore (vocals and drums) mixed with melancholic post-punk effects plus groovy rock'n'roll licks: something like early HÜSKER DÜ meets the WIPERS and the ESTRANGED. I just watched a video of this band and it's impressive how the two guitar players trade off leads, all while one of them also sings and mans a pedal board. This is multi-task punk for the future. Don't you ever give in to the chorus pedal amnesty program. Two solidly good tracks recommended for your listening pleasure. Looking forward to finally seeing them this summer up in Washington. (LT)
(Forward)

CULTURE SHOCK – "Attention Span" CD

In the exalted lineage of UK punk rock maestro/singer/lyricist/superstar Dick Lucas, CULTURE SHOCK are the missing link between the SUBHUMANS and CITIZEN FISH. SUBHUMANS were, of course, anarcho-punk originals with a bit of reggae. CITIZEN FISH stuff the punk back into ska, and the ska back into punk. CULTURE SHOCK, featuring Dick, together with alumni from the A-HEADS and ORGANISED CHAOS, were innovators of ska-punk-dub-reggae. Starting from the ashes of the SUBHUMANS in 1986, they blazed trails with three albums in three years. And that was that. Well, then came CITIZEN FISH. Twenty-five years later, Dick's at it again, with original bassist Jasper still providing the fluid lead instrument. Dick has an uncanny ability never to sound dated, and this new CULTURE SHOCK effort literally just picks up where they left off. No lack of style, pace, lyrical incisiveness, and smooth versatility. This really is fantastic. And a pure delight. A true original, and still up there with the best. (RK)
(Alternative Tentacles)

THE DAHMERS – "Terror on Wheels" EP

With everybody depending on Bandcamp and the like, it's often tough to learn much about a new band. Many labels no longer have their own real web presence. Anyway, as I suspected, these cats are from Sweden. How could I tell? They play a real up-tempo brand of punk that is very much rock'n'roll. The sound is full and it's well—but not over—produced. To me, it just sort of sounds Swedish. And with names like Ohansson and Augustsson and Karlsson, it really didn't take a genius to figure it out. The bottom line is that this is top of the line when it comes to melodic, up-tempo punk *rock*. (KK)
(Lövely)

THE DANCING CIGARETTES – "Dance Dogs Dance" LP

My first introduction to Bloomington, Indiana's DANCING CIGARETTES was their track "Broken Windows" on the seminal 1981 LP compilation *Red Snerts*. On a record that was already brimming with unconventional Indiana punk and New Wave, their track stood out at the end as an outright jittery, nervous breakdown. This LP collects snapshots of the band throughout their existence from 1981-1983, chronicling both studio and live tracks. While associated closely with the Gulcher Records scene, the DANCING CIGARETTES were a bit of an anomaly in their town. They played off-kilter New/No Wave that was somehow equal parts TELEVISION, prog-rock, KLEENEX, post-punk, PERE UBU, and glam informed by Dada / Subgenius vibes... with a sax and warbly synthesizers! They existed in that sweet spot when punk was still pretty wide open in early '80s, before the rigid boundaries started being set up. The live tracks flow into the studio cuts without any loss of momentum. All the tracks have been remastered and it sounds incredible. I can't recommend this enough! (GH)
(Magnetic South)

DARK BLUE – "Red, White + Dark Blue" LP

Some Sharkey band from Philly I never heard of. This is a singles compilation on a label outta Germany so I guess they were famous. Seeing the name Sharkey I was kinda expecting some kinda rager, but this is more plodding jangling gothy shit and the super deep baritone vocal stylings were unexpected, like ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN deep or something. I don't really know what they were going for. I can imagine hearing them in a big rock club opening for the BREEDERS or maybe something more like GROTUS. (GB)
(Adagio830)

DEAFKIDS / TIMEKILLER – split EP

The DEAFKIDS side is mathematical obtuse hardcore the likes of SWING KIDS and CROM TECH with drone spacey guitars like DEAD MEADOW. A distant echoed voice fills the sonic landscape in a black metal style with some pogo beats. This builds like climbing a tree and cuts you off like throwing yourself on a noose at around five minutes, leaving me swinging and wanting more. TIMEKILLER bring things back to Earth with three hard garage rock no-fucks-given tracks. Sadistic vocals detached from an MC5 arcade. Incredibly raw and crackled recording like there is some lint on the needle. As a contrast to the trippy DEAFKIDS side, this TIMEKILLER grit is a great way out. A truly cosmic, dark, and furious punk rock experience from both sides. I want a copy. (JR)
(Get Better)

DEEP HEAT – "Still Life" LP

ANTISCHISM put out a seminal record in 1991 called *Still Life* and in my opinion closed the book on that title for a punk record. Luckily for DEEP HEAT they sound nothing like the aforementioned band. This band from Australia is firmly locked in melodic indie-punk style. That could be construed as a disgusting description by some of our readers, but I assure you that it is not my intention. What saves this record is the dirty production and sound mastering. The perfect up and down flow of the songs helps a lot too. In searching for the words to describe the sound, tags like post-punk and indie rock come and go through my mind, but that is too simple. This is good music made by people that care about their craft and it is really obvious, from the artwork to the lyrics and sharp musicianship. I actually like this record the more I listen. the songs are intelligent and creative. They sort of remind me of MISSION OF BURMA or the ORGAN at times, which is a high compliment. If you like bands like that then you should give this a listen or two. (WK)
(Poison City)

DESECHABLES – "La Maqueta" LP

This record brings to light the band's first demo tape of which most of the copies were destroyed in a car accident in 1982. DESECHABLES is

one of the most emblematic Spanish punk bands. They formed in 1980 when the singer was fourteen years old. Despite being from Barcelona, by 1985 they came to be associated with the Madrid scene because of the record label that released their most widely distributed record tied to PARALISIS PERMANENTE and GABINETE CALIGARI. This recording captured their bare-bones approach to punk, laying the foundation for their more CRAMPS and SIOUXSIE driven style to come. For me, the stand-out track is "Vampiro," which reminds me a bit of their contemporaries ÚLTIMO RESORTE. It's worth noting that the original guitar player who plays on this record was killed in 1983 when he used a fake gun to rob a jewelry store. Turned out the jeweler had a real gun. These bouts of bad fortune combined with drug related tragedies helped elevate this band into myth status. Cool artifact to get your hands on. (LT)
(Munster)

DFMK – "7 Canciones Sobre Un Individualismo Radical" EP

A quartet from Tijuana playing a SoCal-styled punk with hardcore influences, more CIRCLE JERKS than SSD. More melodic and rock'n'roll than CIRCLE JERKS. The band is super tight, but the confident vocal style provides most of the hooks. The details in the drumming add a lot whether you're paying attention or not. While nothing particularly makes this record stand out, it has energetic moments and is solid all the way through. (MA)
(La Escalera / Get Better / Sex Sheet)

DIVISION – "Conscription" EP

This band sounds like half of INSTED and UNIFORM CHOICE decided to start a band last year. The lyrics are heartfelt and emotional, the music unrepentantly melodic, and I find the overall posi attitudes on this record resonating with me. Listening to shit like this is like getting your chakras realigned. I'm ready for the start of a new week! For fans of: low top Vans, bruised ankles, Big Gulps. (MW)
(Division International)

DRAGSTER – 10" EP

Two-piece torture trash from some strange crescent between France and Belgium. They obviously don't have functional toilets there, as DRAGSTER spray fuzzy garage shit in all directions. Unfocused strum'n'splash that sure seems like it'd whip legions of sideburn-enthusiasts into a live show tizzy but fails to produce anything memorable on record. A common problem easily rectified by quality songs. Next time, if there is one. (MC)
(Frantic City / Retard)

DRIVING RAIN – "Intervention Times" LP

Sappy, Americana-influenced boring rock from Sweden. Fans of '90s LEMONHEADS, the SMITHEREENS, or the embarrassing or forgettable portions of the REPLACEMENTS career should be stoked. Total snooze fest. (DZ)
(Lövely)

DYSNEA BOYS – "Forgot How to Read" LP

Are you gonna believe me when I tell you that the former singer of SOCIAL UNREST is in a current band and it's good? Well, there's some good and not-so-good moments, but never any bad ones. In the good moments, DYSNEA BOYS play dark, moody, chorus-pedal driven post-punk that has hints of ADOLESCENTS and some early SoCal punk stuff on Posh Boy (think CHANNEL 3). In the not-so-good moments, the songs feel repetitive, emotionless, and a little more than "phoned in." I'm thinking specifically of "Here She Comes" and "Bucket of Gas," which manages to build on one main riff that goes nowhere. Overall, this is good, though. (GH)
(Take It Back)

ELECTROCUTIONER – "The Blood of the Pigs Must Flow in the Street" EP

This is some deadly, rotten, stripped down to the bloody bones hardcore. It's so primitively brutal and full of venom that I can't help but love it. Sounds like a lost UK82 demo of some band that no one could stand at the time. The singer growls and barfs up some real nasty stuff about cops, hipsters, and rich people. I recommend you go sit in some concrete wasteland and crank this one up real loud. (BA)
(Cannabis / Make 'Em Sweat)

ELECTROCUTIONER – "5 Trax Demo" EP

There is no love or warmth going on here. Raw ZOUO or GISM-esque death pogo about eye-staring, pig-gouging, smashing, and fire. This is gruesome '80s Japanese-style metal from 2012 in LA. The lyrics are non-apologetic anarchism and death wishes. First song on side B makes the request to "die an overdose." *A lethal overdose*. Um, okay? That's sad but your music is alive and kicking gnarly punk. This EP is short and not sweet. It's rotten sounding and in the best way. Two people are thanked on this EP: one for the glue and one for the clue. Yes. (JR)
(Make 'Em Sweat)

ENTRE REJAS – "Consumidos Pelo Tempo" EP

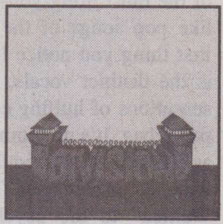
Their track on *Sound The Alarms* was a creamer, so I was pretty juiced to slap this platter on the deck. And, unsurprisingly, it rips. Blasting through thirteen sub-minute fastcore rippers (plus one track that clocks in around the 90-second mark), these Brazilians show their hand immediately… and it's all aces. Classic hardcore bangers, chaotic starts and stops, manic fast hardcore with merciless blastbeats, frantic vocals…and of course there are breakdowns. Really good breakdowns. This is all the shit that you want. (WN)
(Chaina / En Los Nervios Sellos / Prejuizo / Thrash Unreal)

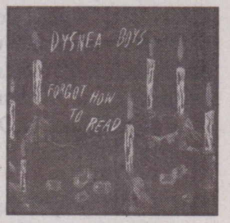
FRAMTID – "The Horrific Visions" EP

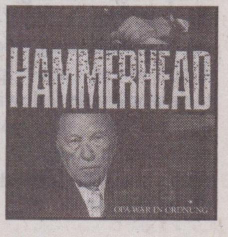
Backing off on the bombastic low end ever so slightly this time around, Osaka crashers FRAMTID emerge with sharper teeth and even more attack than on 2013's *Defeat Of Civilization*. "Visions Of Onkalo" and "The Rights Of C.S.D." are perfect thunderous D-beat bangers, but then the flip side gets weird. Jacky's guitars are particularly imposing on the total mindfuck that is "By Any Reason," and the way that track leads into "Racist Scum"…*are you kidding me?!?* FRAMTID is the embodiment of a band as bulldozer, just crushing everything in their path. You already know you need this. (WN)
(Brain Solvent Propaganda)

FUCKEMOS – "Can Kill You" LP

One of the greatest punk records ever made gets repackaged with some lackluster grim reaper artwork and spit out on vinyl for the first time, I think. The original artwork sucked as well but seriously you've got your classic punk albums like SEX PISTOLS – *Never Mind the…*, GERMS – *GI*, FLIPPER – *Generic*, the CLASH...well fuck the CLASH and their bullshit political white boy reggae crap. Then you get this monstrous Texas-sized masterpiece of an album with a swirling cesspool of neo-psychedelia, hard rock, offensive drug punk, and some







of the most bring-you-to-tears BEACH BOYS-like pop songs of the last three decades. The first thing you notice listening to FUCKEMOS is the distinct vocals, reminiscent of the aural sensations of huffing certain chemicals out of a paper bag. It's no gimmick, though, and no joke as one who witnessed them live can attest. From the opening sludge of "The Screams Of The Wild Women" to the psychedelic Broadway show tune "80 Gay Sailors" through the controversial family sing-along "Pedophile" to the ending melancholy notes of "Fuck Emos Play At Parties" this is their *Pet Sounds* and the apex of their of twisted genius. So don't miss out, chump. Buy it for your mother. (RO)
(Slope)

FUCKEMOS – "Lifestyles Of The Drugged And Homeless" LP

I shat all over Fuckemos last ish, I think. Thankfully I get to contend with a larger, steamier dose of their mid '90s piss-take punk bullshit this go-around. Bikini-brief, tattooed asshole joke noise previously relegated to CD purgatory and now pressed to vinyl as demanded by no one. Extreme irritant rock. Presumably a live spectacle, but worthless even by novelty standards. I love asshole music more than just about anything and even I'm bummed by this. (MC)
(Slope)

THE GEE STRINGS – "New And Used Musical Instruments" LP

Germany's GEE STRINGS are still at it, putting out their own brand of infectious Teutonic retro New Wave '70s punk. Starting out with a lifted THUNDERS guitar lick, they bounce along with peppy tunes that are OK but mostly leave me limp and yacking up sugar sweet glop after the novelty of the singer's sexy Nina Hagen-esque voice wears off and I'm forced to listen to crap like "I Will Get You." Maybe that sounds a little harsh. There are some stompers here—"Hate To Say" and "Detox"—and they do a competent job of covering a SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS tune, but this is mostly forgettable pop garbage packaged in some truly awful cover artwork. Nien. (RO)
(Adrenalin Fix / Ghost Highway / KOTJ / Stryckhnine)

GINO & THE GOONS – "Love and Hate/I Don't Want You Around"

GINO & THE GOONS have a 45 on Total Punk. It's a fantastic electric folk rock experience that should warm the cockles of every vinyl hoarding, fast-muscle-twitching, "is there any meth left?"-asking, napkin-stealing, cig-filter-removing, rock-rolling, hair-mussing, denim-loving, one-wipe-will-do-it member of their worldwide following. Oh shit, it sold out 20 minutes ago, guess you should follow through with Plan B. The rope is already slung over the rafter, ready for immediate use. (RW)
(Total Punk)

GIORGIO MURDERER – "Holographic Vietnam War" LP

Now that's what I call music! Telegraphed from a future none of us can conceive of and limited by the current drab technological reality, GIORGIO MURDERER plays glitchy music for glitchy listeners. The cover art / aesthetic looks like it was clipped out of *Modern Soldier* circa 1978. Neolithic synth filth slides over staccato drum patterns and occasional guitar wheeze while a melancholy alien invokes his intention to beat up the West Coast while also asserting his creed of committing crimes all the time. This is the soundtrack to an extremely budget 1982 SciFi series set in a universal desolate crumbling suburb somewhere in America. I was worried that this long player would not live up to my expectations—the 45 on Goner is a classic for our times—but worries are for weaklings—this is a masterpiece! Cheap and violent synth punk with tunes that are catchier than debased Halloween candy. Will make you want to move your bones in a alarming but rhythmic fashion! I heard a rumor this entity is playing here soon, gotta figure out how to hop the fence at the pricy fest because this is one of my LPs of the year. GIORGIO MURDERER eats GERRY AND THE HOLOGRAMS for breakfast. Forboding! Enticing! Consume. (LG)
(Pelican Pow Wow)

GOOD TIME AUSSIE BOGALARS – "A Slab Of Liquid Cunt" LP

I guess I'm supposed to be either offended or entertained, right? They slap the lyrics on the internet but not on the record *(tsk tsk, ya fukks, share the brilliance)*, so I put in my work like a good politically aware punk rocker…and yup, turns out "Squat Fuck," "Fuck Rot," and "You've Got A Disease" are, in fact, stupid. Lyrics address venereal disease, sex, smelly sex, buying drugs for pregnant girlfriends, smelly people, limitless derogatory descriptions of female genitalia… all of the offensive bases are covered and every effort is made to ensure that their depictions of disease-ridden sex will be as nauseating as possible. Success. You did it, boys, your band is DADS *(antiquated slang for "dumb as dog shit"—I'm trying to fit in here)*. Words like "fag" and "cunt" are used liberally, and the music is appropriately ignorant and filthy. Churning low end almost-in-tune metal punk with bursts of sloppy grind. (WN)
(Blak Skul)

GUNK / MARGE – "Garge Munk" split EP

The standout tracks on this split are from MARGE. In another context, the lyrics "*Despite my best efforts / You still love me / Despite my best efforts / I think I love you too*" could easily be schmaltzy, love song garbage, but MARGE manage to add that special rock edge that makes "Shave Yr Head" the far and away best track of this EP. Their other offering, "S.P.F.", is movie soundtrack material in that it doesn't push itself to the front but seeps into your brain and perfectly adds a feeling of ennui to the background. The GUNK tracks suffer from being paired with the MARGE tracks. They're fairly standard indie rock tunes that fail to make your ears perk up in the same way. "And…I Won't Stop" has its moments, though, with the jarring male vocals shouted over the main female lead. (RH)
(Ranch Jams / Thousand Island)

GURR – "Furry Dream" LP

GURR is a Berlin based rock band with an LA sound—imagine if the YEAH YEAH YEAHS were completely obsessed with TY SEGALL. This one-sided LP slips back and forth between fuzzed-to-death garage rock and mid-tempo jangly songs with harmonizing vocals. The whole record seems like rock music for "cool kids" made by "cool kids." Where there is inherently more focus on *partying* than there is on *art*. It's meant as party music. You will find no self-discovery through this album. But if you're just looking to jump around and smile, you can do waaaaaay worse. The tunes are very memorable and catchy. Well-written and well-executed garage pop. (FS)
(Asset Discos)

HACESJA – "Rehearsal in Garage 1.05.90" EP

Put the magazine down. Get to the record store (in person or online, whatever you can do at this exact moment you are reading these words). Buy this fucking record. Fucking insane self-described semi-straightedge "ultra fast noisecore" from Poland. The recording quality is raw as fuck, the feedback will shatter your eardrums as the riffs pulverize your brain. Equal parts STRAIGHT AHEAD, INFEST, 7 M.O.N., and LÄRM, with all the speed, humor, rage and chaos that mix implies. High-pitched crazy freakout vocals, two-second songs, drums clattering to keep up, all topped off with an INFEST cover (charmingly identified as "Fetch the Piles"). I should write multiple paragraphs about this beast but it honestly has left me nearly speechless. Fucking amazing. The swank packaging includes a reprinted *MRR* interview from 1990, contemporary interviews with all the band members, old photos, reproductions of the rehearsal/live tape that an American friend released in the early '90s, a sticker, and a tiny backstage laminate thing (!). Don't let the generic white guy in a hoodie art fool you into thinking this is lame-o youth crew, this is fucking nuts and if you dig fast hardcore it's definitely your new jam. (AU)
(Refuse)

HAMMERHEAD – "Opa War In Ordnung" EP

Riveting hardcore from Germany with dark riffs in the vain of RAJOITUS. There is something relaxed and simultaneously pulverizing about this EP. I like it a lot. Tight D-beat percussion with some dirty looseness in the strings so nothing becomes too produced. The

raspy vocals are as anthemic as BLACK FLAG and the proto-hardcore MELVINS elements give this a modern and inspired style. Seven tracks that never tire, a solid offering in Deutsch. I especially like their song title "Die Alte im Vegancafe" about an old guy, but you probably knew that. (JR)
(Heart First)

HARD LEFT – "Economy" EP
If you're anything like me, you're automatically pre-disposed to question the integrity of any band that all dresses in the same outfits. But in HARD LEFT's case, it seems so obvious. They are an incredibly focused band. Everything is calculated and planned. They are a band formed with the explicit intentions of creating (and only creating) leftist political street punk. And the results are well worth the effort. If you're looking for British (sounding) street punk about the struggle against capitalism, it's hard to do better than HARD LEFT. (FS)
(Future Perfect)

THE HEADLINERS – "Self Love Affair" LP
I like this a ton, but I'm struggling to describe the sound. Sure, it's power pop, but it's got a real full sound and is sometimes just plain pop. At the same time sometimes I just want to call it New Wave. And the harmonies are a big part of the equation. It's catchy as all hell. You might get the impression that it's sort of wimpy, reading through all that. In fact, they definitely are not. They're French, if you care about these things. Excellent record. (KK)
(Une Vie Pour Rein)

HEAVY DRAPES – "Should I Suck Or Should I Blow" CD EP
The long gone safety pin days and razorblade nights never died for Rikki Stiv, Jerry Dangerous, and the others in HEAVY DRAPES. No shit?! That's really their names and this is one really shitty punk rock nostalgia trip from the UK. These guys look old enough to do this right but they don't and should instead swiftly follow the ghost of Sid into the loo of eternity and shoot up and die. (RO)
(Tarbeach)

HIRS COLLECTIVE / PEEPLE WATCHIN' – split EP
Both sides of this split feed into each other in an awesome way while being sonically very different. The trans, political-queer grind duo of HIRS brought in some friends for this release to make the HIRS COLLECTIVE, which features a different lyricist/vocalist on almost every song of their side. Their trademark samples punctuate each track, and Lewis Black shouting "And another American family is destroyed!" before the raucously chaotic, screaming-over-talking "Dyke Faggot Freak" lands perfectly. In just around six minutes, ten tracks of queer rage pummel the listener into a state somewhere near rampage. PEEPLE WATCHIN' chug out two folk punk, sing-a-long tracks about growing up transgender and being transgender in our current social climate, and I dare anyone to try not to stomp along. The repeated chant of "*We're gonna burn 'em to the ground*" on "Dezlan" is the aural representation of three strangers who just met at the show singing along to a song they're just hearing for the first time with their arms around each others' shoulders. All around, both bands bring a raw, angry energy to the table and leave the listener with a split that they won't stop flipping over and over. The violet vinyl and appropriately placed ass and nipple artwork on the disc won't hurt to have in your collection either. (RH)
(Get Better / Prairie Smoke)

THE HULLMEN – "Pretty Red Flags" CD
This trio from Wisconsin play late '80s college rock'n'roll. Raw and fuzzy—reminds me of PIXIES, DINOSAUR JR, and even MUDHONEY. I wasn't crazy about this despite the comparisons. It's decent but it just doesn't stand out. Probably best for locals at the dive bar. (RL)
(Golden Key)

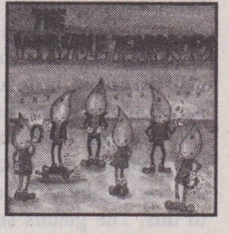
IF IT KILLS YOU – "Mare-Imbrium/Buried in Your Backyard"
This sounds like radio rock. Maybe it's radio rock with an "edge." It's like a band that wanted to play technical emo, like a heavy version of BRAID that's also super pop and listener friendly. It's musically very melodic, with sung vocals that mix with a subdued screaming. It ultimately sounds like it's trying to appeal to the masses but just ends up being boring. (PA)
(self-released)

IMPULSE – "Backbreaker" EP
While this irate hardcore band doesn't fully fall into powerviolence territory, the SPAZZ, CROSSED OUT, and INFEST influences are undeniable both in terms of the riffs and the song structures—which are often unpredictable yet never herky-jerky—in addition to the more obvious signifiers. The mad at the world vocals and rough but not too rough recording do the music and sentiment justice, and everything is played extremely tight. Eleven songs and only the final is longer than a minute. I'm into this! (DG)
(To Live a Lie)

INFINITE VOID / MOTH – split EP
One song each by a couple bands that are at the goth end of the spectrum. INFINITE VOID's "Even Ground" is upbeat and benefits from fluttering guitars and a soothing vocal quality. "I Dream In Black and White" by MOTH is more akin to something CLAN OF XYMOX would've done in the early to mid '80s. That's not to say it's bad at all. I totally dig it. If these styles weren't currently highly acclaimed in the DIY punk scene, it would be a stretch to qualify this a punk record. Regardless, the material is hot and could surely get people moving at your local goth DJ night. (MA)
(Contraszt / Mass Media / Unwound)

IN SCHOOL – "Cement Fucker" EP
IN SCHOOL plays hardcore in the anti-unity tradition of NYHC, perfected by bands like NO THANKS and BORN AGAINST. *Cement Fucker* looks and sounds so good, all ominous concrete faces, low end like a horse running through your house, and guitars that sound like a fuzzed-out WRETCHED. IN SCHOOL's minute-long songs are economical stabs straight to the heart of every complacent coward dead-set on upholding social order in any morally bankrupt, dead-eyed scene. If you feel like any of these songs might be about you, I strongly encourage you to take a step back and rethink what you're protecting and why. Absolutely essential. (SW)
(Thrilling Living)

INVISIBLE TEARDROPS – "Cry, Cry, Cry" LP
This makes me think of a Stiff Records band trying to play QUESTION MARK AND THE MYSTERIONS. The LP is even named after a ? lyric! It has a pub rock feeling somehow, but these teardrops are really going for that soulful '60s rootsy garage feeling, REIGNING SOUND but not quite up there. The farfisa organ is the driving force of the group in



a really cool way. It has that lost teenage feeling that many groups are attempting nowadays in the wake of the success of SHANNON AND THE CLAMS etc, but with a slight rocker edge rather than goofy bobby soxer stoner. I could imagine Norton or Bomp! putting this LP out. Before reading up on the band I assumed they were from NY. No idea why, I guess the record has a Coney Island at closing time feeling, but they are actually from Florence, Alabama. The cover art kinda reminds of the FLAMIN' GROOVIES underground comix style. My favorite song was "3 Kind of Tears." Worth investigation if any of this appeals to your sensibilities! (LG)
(Arkam)

KNARK – LP
This record suffers from production in my opinion—it's just too clean for my taste. That being said, the songs on here are well-written and catchy. It's hardcore by the books, which is cool with me. Members of MAKABERT FYND, DISSEKKERAD, and KAKOFONIA, if you are keeping track. "Krigsgrisar" is the standout—it reminds me of HJERTESTOP in the short and fast delivery. *Jävla jävla*, bastard bastard. I like it. Can I say that I would go to see this band play live for sure, but I wouldn't buy the record? I just did. (WK)
(Mangel Wax / Opposition / Rawmantic Disasters)

KORROSIVE – "Syövyttävä Laji" EP
Oakland's '80s Euro HC bastards return with their first proper EP release. Four songs of slick, well-written hardcore that nod heavily towards Finland in presentation though the tunes show a variety of influences beyond the borders of Suomi. Sure, there are obvious flourishes of KAAOS in the mix, but there's at least as much DISARM and CRUDE SS as well, while the metallic "Bastards" is more MOTÖRHEAD than, well...BASTARDS. Regardless of any disconnect between style and substance, this is a fucking solid slab of hardcore punk that benefits from an excellent recording that doesn't allow the reverb-ed vocals to dominate the mix. Their earlier releases have been fairly limited, so hopefully this record has better distribution and introduces a local powerhouse to a larger audience. (AU)
(Distort Reality)

LITHICS – "Borrowed Floors" LP
When I first heard this band I lost my mind! It's a perfect representation of the strange girl sound of the early '80s post-punk explosion, the deadpan delivery of BUSH TETRAS with the controlled vision of JUNGLE NAUSEA or AMA-DOTS. "Too Many Creeps" meets "Hit Girls" in a dream world that is actually happening now so you can be a part of it. It's a dry, constrained, rhythmic feeling; you can imagine girls all in black with giant plastic pop art earrings at an art opening in 1981 writhing to this. The guitars snake over each other like an insect in your ear, the bass and drums lollop along. It's ironic and paranoid enough to make you wanna grab yr Super 8 camera and make some art. If you are a fan of *Debt Begins at 20* or LUDUS, you are gonna fall hard for this record. Don't hesitate. The first press sold out in a week, but I think distros still have it and there's a new press on the way. (LG)
(Water Wing)

LYSOL – "On the Corner" LP
This originally appeared as LYSOL's debut cassette, but now we have it in glorious stereo on a big time punk label who must have encouraged the group to assume a less litigiously provocative band name. This record draws a lot from the STOOGES and *Blood Red River*-era SCIENTISTS but keeps the pace in true hardcore territory. You get a track like "Clean Living," which builds a genuinely groove-oriented rager around the "TV Eye" drumbeat, followed by "Human Wreckage," which wouldn't sound entirely out of place on a dubbed-to-destruction '80s tape comp like *New York Thrash* or *Code Blue*. Some bands that walk on that garage/punk borderline have a hard time delivering convincing vocals, but rather than overdoing it the singer here succeeds in keeping it very real: "*I thought I was tough / but I found out the hard way / my body is just a shell*." Tough or tender, it's a winning recipe. (EW)
(Deranged)

MALE GAZE – "King Leer" LP
I have a friend in NYC who reviews records while working shifts at a bar. As a result he gets to judge the music against the reactions of the patrons in the room as well as discuss the records with any friends that might pop in. I wish I could play this record for him because it made me think of him immediately. Maybe it was the gothy melodrama of the vocals or the sonic similarity to INTERPOL in the song "Ranessa." This is a "mature" album by local garage punk standards, which could sound like a dis, but I mean it in a positive way. It's as noisy, sludgy, and garagey as you might expect from Castle Face, but with a polished sheen, pop sensibilities, and songwriting depth that could see the band gain expanded popularity. (AM)
(Castle Face)

MAN IS THE BASTARD: BASTARD NOISE – "The Honesty Shop" 12"
MAN IS THE BASTARD aka BASTARD NOISE prove that they are still the top link of the freak chain. On this offering we have no instruments and no fucking good time, just caustic space for an introspective nightmare. If you're not a total freak and you say that noise sucks, you would have a point. BASTARD NOISE aka MAN IS THE BASTARD, however, is a special case. When they do their creepy noise stuff, it freaks me out for real. It's like visiting a post apocalyptic wasteland on some far off planet. No references, just catatonic void. Get on board the skull-emblazoned rocket ship. We're never coming back. (BA)
(Robotic Empire)

MENTHOL – "Plastic Garden" EP
This record takes the first song to fully warm up, but after that it's fire. The rest of the A-side is uptempo sleazy garage punk with the absolute perfect jangly guitar sound that makes you want to both dance and have dumb fun. The B-side shifts gears a bit, with its opener interspersing the garage with some Reagan-era hardcore blasting. "Plastic Garden" slows things down considerably, getting slightly somber, but is still good. The vocals are paranoid sporadic throaty shouts that listen like someone too drunk to fully keep up with the rest of the band. One of the best of 2016 so far. (DG)
(Not Normal)

MRS. MAGICIAN – "Bermuda" LP
The heavy synth and speedy tempos of the first song on this LP fooled me into believing that I was settling in for something along the lines of the MIND SPIDERS' *Meltdown* LP, but they completely shifted gears by the third song and MRS. MAGICIAN cruised into an alt-pop territory. Even though it's a little on the darker side, there are still hints of the pop melodies of the BEACH BOYS, snapshots of BUILT TO SPILL, and the utter train wreck madness of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT. Sometimes the singer's voice sounds like the guy from WILCO after he's drank a pot of coffee. The lyrics deal with alienation, despair, and addiction, but present it in almost peppy demeanor. Overall it's not what I was expecting, but a solid LP nonetheless. (GH)
(Swami)

MUD SEX – "Welfare Taco Bell" EP
This is just crap. I can usually enjoy some Southern primitive punk rock like SELF MADE MONSTERS with offensive songs like "Sex Offender Blues" sounding like they were recorded through a dirty hillbilly ass, but this is just booooring. Plodding and dumbly hateful lyrically with cartoon howling wolf vocals that are so fucking lazy that it's like why bother. If you don't care enough to try on your own record why should I bother to give a fuck. They played with ANTISEEN and obviously didn't learn a thing. Stop wasting my time. (RO)
(Were Opossum)

MUJERCITOS – "Agresivamente Ignorante" EP
I've been anticipating this EP since loving the shit out of their demo from two years back, and I'm happy to say it's another enjoyable and interesting document from the prosperous Mexico City punk scene. MUJERCITOS certainly shares a similar thrashing ferocity with TERCER MUNDO (as well as one member), but really cool and innovative guitar and bass interplay (see "Euronacos" and "Facilona

Nights") sets them apart from most of their contemporaries. The overall vibe is fucking intense. Consistently pure malice in the vocal department. My vague understanding of Spanish tells me that they probably have really cool lyrics and I wish I knew more about these songs! If you're looking for a new record to get, pick this one! It's awesome! (MA)
(Not Normal)

MUTANT ITCH – "Very Ugly Punk Nonsense" flexi

It's that noisy 1-2-1-2 *dupa-dupa* that you're hearing a lot these days…but then you hear *these* freaks do it and a potentially tired subgenre instantly has new life. Oppressive, demonic vocals, guitars fukkd beyond belief, and that incessant pogo beat. (WN)
(Nightrider)

NATIONS ON FIRE – "Burn Again..." LP

Reissue of this Belgium band's 1992 12" EP. Just about every early '90s post-youth crew political hardcore signifier is here, along with a lot of blazing Euro edge influence that gives this record most of its redeeming value. The rest is a lot of breakdowns that sound like how JNCOs and XXL shirts with X'd up Tazmanian Devils look, along with that '90s-style rumbling bass that's pretty high in the mix. A lot of different vocal styles abound, including almost falsetto yelling, singing of various stripes, FUGAZI-type crooning, and spoken word that walks the line between rapping and slam poetry. At least one person in this band was later in that grind band RISE ABOVE, who did a good record on 625 a while back. (DG)
(Refuse)

NERVOSAS – "Utility" EP

This band has a bunch of releases out over the past few years and I'm sure people that love them will take notice of this EP. "Utility" is the sole original track and basically showcases what they are all about: straightforward post-punk with a bit of a depressing deathrock vibe and a lot of musical twists and turns. Highlights are awesome guitar leads and male/female vocal tradeoffs. The really cool thing about this record is that the B-side contains two covers of Midwest bands who are both current and unknown. "Teenage Depression" is the hit, originally by GONERS, admittedly a band I had never heard before. When I say hit, I mean a perfect song! This recording is really clean and shows off NERVOSAS keen musicianship. What else is there to say? This record has almost no flaws and even less information. (WK)
(Superdreamer)

OBN III'S – "Rich Old White Men/On The Verge Of Collapse" 7"

Eh, kinda chunky rock'n'roll soup here firmly using the tried 'n true RADIO BIRDMAN recipe but without any sharp memorable taste. Everything is powerfully recorded, thick ropy strands of rock going all over the place, but nothing is growing from this effluence. Shrug 'n nod. (RW)
(12XU)

ODIO – "Un Mondo Libero Dall'uomo" EP

On the most superficial level it would be fairly easy to lump ODIO in with the rest of the raw punk gang. With the reverb-ed out vocals, aggressive pogo beats, and frequent nods to Japan, this seems like it would fit fairly neatly into a genre box, but thanks to some top-quality songwriting and a surprising diversity of influences, ODIO are not an easy band to pigeonhole. From the repetitive, dirge-like "World," which could be a crusted-up DISORDER or CHAOS UK track, to the straightforward POISON IDEA riffing of "Fabulous Horrific Beast" to the unexpected spoken rant breakdown at the end of "Strictly Criminal," ODIO have a fairly diverse array of tricks up their sleeves. Being a killer live act, I was concerned that the power wouldn't come across on vinyl, but the combination of excellent recording and strong performances give this record a hell of a punch. (AU)
(Nightrider)

OPENIGHTMARE – "Silent Scream" CD

More hard-hitting, mainstream-sounding heavy rock from France's OPENIGHTMARE. On this, their sixth full-length, about half of the tracks are just straight modern radio alt rock *(but good…there are always those few songs that you're like "damn, that's pretty good!" and these are those songs)* and the remainder dances between '90s big club bands like RFTC and JAWBOX and heavier AmRep styled jams. (WN)
(Les Disques de Geraldine / Distorsion / Never Trust An Asshole / To Loose Punkers / Vegas)

OUR NEIGHBORS SUCK – "Skullkrusher" 10"

Whoa, that's how I know OUR NEIGHBORS SUCK. They're that random American band with the LP on Rock-O-Rama with the terrible cover. They were a Phoenix band that played all the bills with touring bands in the mid-'80s like GBH and DOA and YOUTH BRIGADE. I don't think they woulda got on a lotta shows outside of Arizona—they sound like weird acid head kinda hesher dorks, but I have no doubt they were a bonafide thing in Phoenix circa 1985. Their best song here, "Bonehead," is an inexplicable mix of NWOBHM and the DICTATORS, if that's even possible, but they are all over the map with more typified '80s hardcore and acid excursions. Crazy piss yellow 10" wax plays at 45rpm with full color deluxe gatefold cover. Kinda wish they had included a written history and not just photos and flyers. (GB)
(Slope)

OVVN – "I Love Myself and Want to Live" LP

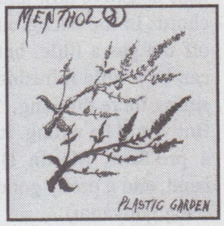
This is heavy—not super hard, but heavy (especially on the bass tone). It's very much in the Albini vein. Not so much SHELLAC but not as far back as BIG BLACK. On this one-sided record they mostly trudge through heavy rock that relies on the bass with the guitar often adding accents (and doing it pretty well at times) or chugging through the song. (PA)
(Don't Look Down)

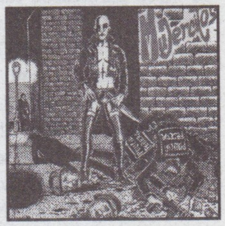
PARANOID – "Punkdemonium Hell" EP

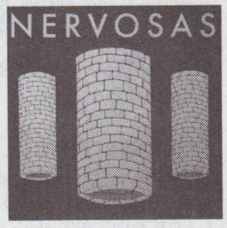
If you missed out on last year's flexi, have no fear: here's a spiffy hard vinyl release of the same tracks with a slick updated layout and a killer cover tacked on for good measure. The A-side tracks are excellent examples of PARANOID's raw-punk-meets-early-black-metal attack, joining feral bass and D-beats to anguished throaty vocals and NIHILIST / ENTOMBED-style trebly guitar leads. B1 is nothing to write home about, a slow and unmemorable CELTIC FROST-influenced plodder, but the side is redeemed by the energetic and entirely faithful cover of DISCLOSE's "Nightmare of Reality." This isn't as essential as their *Satyagraha* LP, but it's a solid release and well worth picking up if you missed out of the original pressing. (AU)
(Viral Age)

PAT TODD AND THE RANKOUTSIDERS – "Blood and Treasure" LP

Attention fellow hepcats! This is your friend and fellow foot fetishist "Rocker Billy" here...to tell you the good news:







"cow punk" is back, baby! If you're like me and spend all of your free time googling "pictures of cowgirls' feet" and "how to wrangle poontang," well, pardner, have I got a band for you. I am one hundred years old and my shitty fucking old car has one thousand REVEREND HORTON HEAT CDs in the little CD holder that's attached to the visor on the passenger's side. My son hasn't spoken to me in a decade. This is the kind of music that men make that makes me think maybe a totalitarian matriarchy is the only course forward I can support. (BB)
(Hound Gawd!)

PINKWASH – "Collective Sigh" LP

Oh man, did you like BIG BUSINESS in the mid-2000s? Because here comes PINKWASH and they are all about that bass/drums duo sound. This is despite the fact that one of these two plays a guitar. Interestingly enough, the riffs owe more to the clipped sludge of Jared's earlier band, KARP, and their last LP. Still, there's no denying that these two are effective at what they do, managing to keep the heavy vibe whilst also channeling some serious pop appeal. It's not lost on this reviewer that the drummer of PINKWASH is also in indie pop "it" band of the moment WAXAHATCHEE. This record gets a little sensitive now and then, with droning synth chords in the background and the vocals letting off the gas a little, but the riffs don't let up. It can be a little refreshing actually. You might be sitting there thinking, "Oh, so it's kind of emo." But you'd be wrong. It's not really anything but a pre-Scott Martin BIG BUSINESS worship band, and a pretty good one at that. (LP)
(Don Giovanni)

PURE HELL – "Noise Addiction" LP

Philly's PURE HELL were the standard bearers of all-Black punk/New Wave bands in the '70s, along with BAD BRAINS (DEATH were totally unknown to punkers until they got booted on the *No One Left To Blame* comp in the early '00s). They only had the one terrific 45 come out on a UK label while originally active, and my only regret concerning that 45 is that one of these unreleased tunes should have been the A-side vs. their OK cover of "These Boots Are Made For Walking." This LP has been out of print for a decade, and it's good to see it back in the racks. PURE HELL's sound is Dangerhouse-level quality, and if they had been out in LA they would have gotten a fuck of a lot more exposure at the time, without a doubt. I fantasize a three track EP with "Noise Addiction" and "No Rules" on the A-side, "Rot in the Doghouse" on the flip. This will have to do. Comes with a big poster. (RW)
(Agente Provocador / Beat Generation / Felguera Editores)

QUEENSBURY RULES – "Bristol Elite" CD

Pretty standard modern UK skinhead effort here. Musically, they are more 4 SKINS / LAST RESORT than COCK SPARRER, with nary a hint of that hardcore stuff. Some decent tuneage and excellent lead guitar certainly help. Lyrically it's the same old shit. Pride in standing tall, working, being hard, not backing down, and lots of nostalgic patriotic bollocks. Since when did being proud of being working class mean toadying up to your lords and masters and fighting their wars for them? (It was the Marquis of Queensbury from whence their name comes from, after all.) Songs about fighting the Zulus and the French and the Germans. Can't but help contrast this drivel with the likes of the ANGELIC UPSTARTS who sang about class pride through solidarity, trade unions, the unemployed, blowing up the bosses, fighting fascism, anti-militarism, etc. Then again, a glance at the roster of their US label-mates seems to be the same patriotic bollocks. Ho hum. (RK)
(United Riot)

RAKTA – "Intenção/A Busca Do Círculo"

These Brazilian ladies are truly a powerhouse. They've carved out a signature sound that continues evolving and is neither directly imitating nor imitable. These two tracks comprise their most experimental and brooding release yet and in all honesty it kind of gives me the heebie jeebies. Fusing together so many influences, it's hard to tell where it all came from, but if pressed I'd describe the soundscape as a collision of post-punk, psychedelic, and a world music assortment. However, what distances this music from what we tend to view as post-punk is the insistence on an effects-laden layered experience that fills out all the sound spaces. There is something intriguing about the wall of sound effect, though the minimalist in me sometimes wishes I could reach in there and turn down the delay pedal. So far I really dig "Intenção" in all its chaos and "A Busca Do Círculo" is what I'd imagine as the score for a postmodern cult movie in which the protagonists are surfer gypsy goths. They have an all-around knack for creating an aesthetic package and this record is no exception. Standout artwork makes this thing really a bang for your buck. In short: two mind-blowing tracks making me extra stoked to catch them again this summer on the West Coast. (LT)
(Dama da Noite / Dê o Fora / Nada Nada)

RAVAGE FIX – "Chrüzlinge" EP

Here we have a Swiss hardcore band that plays some very standard D-beat songs and some driving hardcore songs that are also very standard. They have a sound that is very Swedish and that's about all there is to say. You've heard these songs before, probably many times. Skip this one. (BA)
(Rinderherz)

REACTION – "Accelerator" CD

Apparently these Scottish lads formed way back in 1978. No memory of 'em at all, but they reformed in 2014 and have now done an honest to goodness full-length record. Took 'em a while, obviously. At it's best, it's some classy punk rock like HEARTBREAKERS and SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS. The surfy/CRAMPS stuff falls very flat to these ears, and the whole thing ends up sounding just way too long (though it's only your average back-in-the-day LP length of 40-some minutes. Would've made a classy 12" EP! And good to see the older generation still giving it a welly…(RK)
(Tarbeach)

RED DONS – "The Dead Hand Of Tradition" LP

RED DONS records are few and far between, but they're worth waiting for. Douglas Burns is one of the best songwriters working today. Somehow he can effortlessly combine Pacific Northwest WIPERS gloom with Rikk Agnew beach punk catchiness as well as having a distinct, melodic yet punk singing voice. On this record, I say I can detect some progression in Burns' technique: side two is mostly made up of slower burners that are a contrast or a development from his earlier work in, say, the OBSERVERS. At any speed, great stuff. (AM)
(Deranged)

RIP ROOM – 12"

This is the debut of a new band from San Francisco who I have yet to see. Not that there's anything odd there: pretty much the best chance of me seeing them would be if they did a Netflix special. My loss. RIP ROOM is a post-punk-noise power trio with tightly wound arrangements, staccato rhythms, and dynamic, brittle guitar. These eight songs were recorded at Louder Studios by Tim Green, but if you told me they were recorded at Electrical Audio I would not have been surprised. Like a mix of FUGAZI, SHELLAC, SLEATER-KINNEY, and maybe even the RAVEONETTES. (AM)
(self-released)

RIXE – "Les Nerfs A Vif" EP

Are they the saviors of Oi! music come from Paris to finally wash away the street punk sins of the '90s? And by sins, I am talking about the majority of the terrible bands being put out on labels like Vulture Rock and TKO. Maybe not? They are already headlining fests and people have taken notice. I'm sure there are a whole slew of jarheads waiting to join the Oi! party and ruin it all over again, right? If you haven't heard RIXE, they play raw and unbridled mid-tempo anthems. They have that certain quality of bands like BLITZ and the TEMPLARS that is pretty rare and often only happens by accident. It's the quality that makes them stand out from other bands. The songs are catchy and don't get stale after listening to them ten times in a row. Far from that—you want to learn the language so you can sing with them! They aren't pro musicians playing polished rock music by any means. They play dirty raw riffs that sound like a bunch of kids from the street made them. The

music is primitive but well-crafted and undeniably violent sounding. This record doesn't even try to step away from last years *Coup et Blessures* EP and that is fine by me. To my ears this is perfect. You won't hear that often coming from me in the future. (WK)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

ROTTEN MIND – "I'm Alone Even With You" CD
From the first chord of this album, everything felt warm and familiar. I was already bobbing my head and smiling within ten seconds before I realized that this band sounds *almost exactly like* the VICIOUS. I had to grab the CD case and make sure that Robert Pettersson wasn't their singer. He's not, but the dude from ROTTEN MIND sounds just like him. Trying to move past that, ROTTEN MIND plays straightforward, jangly, upbeat punk in the vein of you-know-who, NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, JAY REATARD, and even some of the power pop stylings of EXPLODING HEARTS. Sure it's a little derivative, but so were all of those other bands when they appeared on the scene. ROTTEN MIND plays the role well and every single song on here is solid as hell. If you're missing new music in that vein, ROTTEN MIND is here to fill the void for you. (GH)
(Lövely)

SATURDAY'S HEROES – "Hometown Serenade" CD
Their logo says "Swedish Punk Rock since 2008," which means they may be too young to remember the BUSINESS song of the same name. They're certainly not too young to dig early CLASH and early SOCIAL DISTORTION, which they channel supremely effectively on this effort right down to the Jones guitar leads. Impeccable English on the lyrics (and vocals) means that if you shut your eyes and listen along, this could comfortably be RANCID minus the ska stuff. If you dig any of the aforementioned bands/eras, you'll love this. I certainly do. (RK)
(Lövely)

THE SCANDALS TX – "This Country is Going to Hell" EP
There's a lot that I don't like about this one. From the uninspired title to the slick metal solos. Dude, a gatefold 7" cover? Hella annoying. I don't care much for the name the SCANDALS either. The songs are by-the-books street level hardcore, but as much as I hate to admit it, they're not all that bad. I'd still probably pass on this, though. (BA)
(Slope)

SEWER BRIGADE – "No Shortcuts to Glory" LP
Sincere Barcelona punk influenced equally by Oi!, LA POLLA RECORDS, and those punk bands that play the neighborhood parties in Spain (which is not to imply that these categories are mutually exclusive). Six songs sung in English and two in Spanish about protests, being on unemployment, the farce of Spanish democracy, dead friends, and being against nationalism. A perfect trip to Barcelona would include seeing these guys play in a squat while drinking an ice cold Estrella Damm. (LT)
(Mad Butcher / Red Star / Trabuc)

SGURD – "The Beginning of the End" EP
This came out three years ago. Better late than never I suppose. Wild and crazed hardcore hurled between squeals of feedback. Short, succinct blasts, but not without a breakdown or two. The vocalist sounds like that guy from 25 TA LIFE, which I find to be annoying. Alexander Heir cover art of a punk pulling the switch on the executioner in an electric chair. It's all over pretty fast, but nothing really sticks. (MA)
(Adagio830)

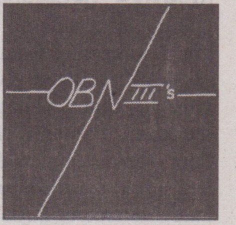
SHEER ATTACK – "Bitter Seed" EP
Got a record from some skateboardin' punks from across the pond jamming on some serious mid to late '80s SoCal vibes. Guitar solos that are Agnew-esqe and an approach that reminds me of FINAL CONFLICT with a tad of AUTHORITIES sprinkled in for good measure. Second record I got this month without a lyric sheet, and I find myself wishing that I could read along, but maybe it's better that I don't? This record was worth the listen. For fans of: Deathboxes, Grindline building a new park in Hunters Point where the dish used to be, Tang. (MW)
(Arkam)

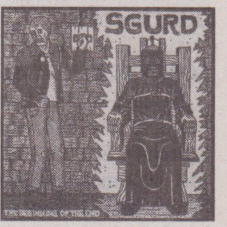
SHRAPNEL – "Frenzied State" EP
This record's insert has SHRAPNEL illustrated in the exact style of BREAKDOWN on the *Runnin' Scared* demo, which leaves little mystery as to the source of their sound. But even though it comes off as carefully studied, they match the divebomb-saturated crunchy beefcake sound of what they're going for extremely well, down to the unconventional breakdowns that heavily characterize this kind of NYHC in particular. The vocalist even kinda sounds like a New York Yankee, despite being from the UK. (DG)
(Triple B)

SICK THOUGHTS – "18 and Free/Choose Death"
Total Punk brings us...you and me, friend...a total punk record by a band called SICK THOUGHTS. (I dislike this band name but it is not a "bad band name.") There is a note in the record that says it was recorded when whoever recorded it (SICK THOUGHTS) was eighteen years old, which actually makes it very good because punk is something you must be out of by the time you're 21 so you can spend the day watching anime porn on your work computer. Total Punk rarely puts out shitty records and doesn't break that streak with this fucker. (BB)
(Total Punk)

SIGHTLINES – "North" LP
Vancouver based pop punk with sick guitar riffs and emotional vocals. This is an easy one to highly recommend if your favorite band happens to be JAWBREAKER. Actually, don't read any more of this review if you hate on JAWBREAKER because I guarantee you'll be wasting your time. The similarities between the two bands are endless and staggering. Yet SIGHTLINES are still able to deliver a (somehow) original sounding LP despite all the mimicking. If you're a bookworm or tenderhearted loner (especially if you're both), you'll love this album. Fantastic bedroom rock! (FS)
(Alarum / Big Smoke)

SISSY SPACEK – "Disfathom" LP
Are you interested in powerviolence made by noise freaks? If you haven't heard SISSY SPACEK, check it out I guess? But really, if you dig the genre, you know this already. I was going to say that though I am a fan of SISSY SPACEK, if you have one record, you kind of have them all, but not only is this one far less noisy than most of their offerings, they now have cookie monster vocals and I no longer give a fuck. (MM)
(Helicopter)





SLANG – "Devastation In The Void" LP

This is a monster. 2014's *Devastation In The Void* crushes from start to finish, anthemic Japanese hardcore with liberal doses of crushing chugs adding a massive low end to the mix. "Dystopia" leaves your jaw on the floor—bulldozing, mid-tempo metallic NYHC has never sounded so perfect on a Japanese hardcore record. Kiyo's guitars are the perfect combination of noise and power, a "just about to break" quality that keeps even the heaviest moments of the record on edge in the face of a rhythm section that seems to know only how to pummel the listener. Lyrics are profoundly political and unabashedly anti-nuke, and KØ's vocals seem to only get more intense as SLANG approaches twenty years as a band. Initially only available on CD, this remastered vinyl release from Prank just sounds *huge* from the moment the needle drops and gives SLANG the treatment they deserve. Excellent. (WN)

(Prank)

SLEEPING BEAUTIES – LP

Jeez, ponder the insanely greasy-drug-sweaty band shot on the back of this LP and then reference back to the song titles: "Meth", "Merchants of Glue", "Addicted to Drugs," "Slumber Party"…this package is definitely hewing to the "Truth In Advertising" credo. Lucky for these talented bastards, they've pulled off an incredibly involving punk'n'roll LP that's right down the ACTION SWINGERS alley or I would be shitting on this from a great, *great* height. Fellow reviewer Mitch "Cheese Please" Cardwell pointed out who was in which previous band going back a decade-plus, so the DNA-in-action makes total sense. SLEEPING BEAUTIES have 2016's most entertaining salute to personal failure yet. Don't be a loser, kids, take one of these. (RW)

(In The Red)

SLICK! – LP

Debut from Slick Nick, groin-brain renaissance fucker of GLITZ, APACHE, and IMPEDIMENTS. SLICK! actually seems like a quantum leap toward sleaze, even compared to the not-so-saintly previous work. It's completely over the top glammed-up rock'n'roll that basks in clichés, provoking smirks immediately but eventually giving way to nodding acceptance and near-embrace. Everything is exaggerated and you're either on board or repulsed. Ultimately, SLICK! has made a legitimately ridiculous record, but one that's impressive in its execution and sheer shamelessness. Rockers only! (MC)

(King Rocker)

SOMA COMA – "Dust" 12"

Blazing-speed Australian hardcore that owes much to the forebearers of the grind scene, especially SIEGE, NEOS, and early RUPTURE. The extremely distinctive rabid weasel vocals are the first element of the band that stands out, but their staying power comes from their ability to seamlessly incorporate slower parts that are more straightforward punk than sludge à la the usual powerviolence fare. The title track, a lengthy jam that starts as high-speed thrash before giving way to an extended looping noisy coda is probably the most memorable on the record, but all of this is pretty solid, elevated by excellent drumming throughout. (AU)

(Cool Death)

SOUL CRAFT – "The Legacy" EP

My first taste of SOUL CRAFT was the *Six Weeks Omnibus Vol. 2* from 2002, and I can assure you that they have only gotten better with age. SOUL CRAFT have the enthusiasm and intensity of a bunch of amphetamine-addled adolescents, but they execute with the precision of a band that's been at this game for more than fifteen years. These tracks are pure insanity—off the rails hyper fast hardcore with screaming guitars dropping in from all over the place, vocals pushed to their absolute limits and distorting like crazy. The songs are erratic, mind-melting, a total assault on all senses with a relentless delivery. The pace slows (a little) for the final track, "Courage To Crawl Out, But Bullied," and it somehow gets more intense… this shit is why Japanese hardcore is impossible to describe. Highest possible recommendation. (WN)

(General Speech)

SPECTRES – "Utopia" LP

This is about what I'd expect from a band that has survived for ten years. While I'm not super familiar with all of their previous material, SPECTRES have always been on my radar and I've liked many of their songs. This release seems like a fully realized cohesive album rather than a mere collection of songs, from the rising and falling of energy throughout both sides to the art to all the small details in production. The vocals are stronger on this than they've been in the past. It sounds like he's found a range he's more comfortable with, which improves the overall sound immensely. The achievement is less about individual instrumentation and more about an overall passionate feel. This record has moments that recall some of my favorite New Wave and post-punk bands from the '80s like CHAMELEONS, SUBURBAN DEATH CULT, and NEW ORDER, rather than the typical one-dimensional filler deathrock band that seems ubiquitous nowadays. I keep saying that I'm tired of dark post-punk and goth stuff, and I'm generally disinterested in checking out new records of that style, but I'm repeatedly surprised by many of the records I'm assigned to review. This one's impressive for sure. (MA)

(Deranged)

THE SPLIT SECONDS – CD

Garage punk rock'n'roll from DC. Guitars light on distortion, this reminds me of the HI-FIVES, the STROKES, and GREEN DAY. I get the feeling this band is "going for it" as opposed to trying to connect to a punk scene (which is fine, but just saying). Although a band, this has a main guy/songwriter thing going on. The teenie boppers might be drawn to this for their "rock'n'roll." I'm OK with this stuff if it is top notch, but this didn't grab me at all. (RL)

(Holy Mother)

SPRAY PAINT – "Shit Me to Tears" EP

Here's the shorter prong of SPRAY PAINT's two-point plan for Goner domination, having already conquered like-minded imprints like SS and Homeless. What have they saved for Memphibians? Well, it's the expected pummel and quirk that they've honed since their debut: a random assemblage of off-bumps into something certainly interesting, nearly beautiful, but always throbbing. Pain? Pleasure? Moonwalk-inducing? Yes, kinda all. I'm good to tag along for a few blocks. (MC)

(Goner)

SPRAY PAINT – "Feel The Clamps" LP

This Goner-label LP fits right in with the rest of SPRAY PAINT's previous full-lengths, making me suspect they recorded a 4-LP box set in 2006 and they've just been leaking them out ever since from an underground archive-vault. These label-wanderin' minstrels don't care where they stop to hang their hats, it's gonna be hanging off any number of band-crafted hooks. Sonic-wise, the No Wave influence is as present as ever: tense, angular, abrasive, measured, powerful. There are very few bands that can make repetition thrilling. The FALL are the past masters of this approach in rock history, with SONIC YOUTH the glaring example of slack-jawed tedium attempting the same approach. SPRAY PAINT is in the winner's circle with the FALL. One of the strongest records of the year so far, *duh*. (RW)

(Goner)

SYNTHETIC ID – "Impulses" LP

SYNTHETIC ID plays mechanical punk, taking the moody British simplicity of bands like WARSAW with the dark and challenging aspects of WIRE that run through *Chairs Missing* and *154*. A good chunk of this LP is challenging in an art punk kind of way, reminding me of the most recent BEHAVIOR LP. The jerky and discordant playing kept me from fully diving into it because as much as I want to like challenging tunes, I can't always do it. They do me a favor and give out a few truly excellent motoric and poppy songs that feel more in line with NEGATIVE SCANNER and EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING. The pop songs really hit the right buttons for me, pull me back in, and I'm having a good time listening to the whole thing again and again to try to crack SYNTHETIC ID's code. (BW)

(Castle Face)

TERMINAL LICKS – "Not Today" EP

Recorded in 2014, this is one of many bands Vassil Mester played in before passing away in 2015. Five songs and all are catchy, super

melodic power pop. I feel like this could have been released by Douchemaster. It's got that power pop "sound." Some of the lyrics are a little tough to take, knowing that one of the band members is no longer with us. I suppose the song selection by the remaining band members wasn't just random. Limited to 300 copies. (KK)
(It's Trash!)

TRIAGE – "Power Beat" EP

If Nosferatu had a top ten list in *MRR*, this would be at the top of this month's (if I had a list, this would be at the top of mine as well), and a shoo-in for year end. Straight up there's a guitar solo in "Dystopic Scene" that sounds like the creepy, minor chord laden lead-in to a silent era villain. I heard someone compare this band to SUICIDAL TENDENCIES and while I think that missed the mark, this record does have a crossover vibe, but more along the lines of ENGLISH DOGS forgoing punk and writing *Forward Into Battle*. *Power Beat* is an apt name—the rhythm section is like a brick to the face, while the guitar sounds like a tooth scrubbing. The vocals are triumphant and delivered like the singer is spitting them in your face. This record is the soundtrack to a structure fire. For fans of: the drought, economic collapse, making your parents' lives miserable. (MW)
(Larry Tony Produzioni)

TRUE IDENTITY – "Demo '15" EP

This record is no longer available from either of the labels that co-released it, as TRUE IDENTITY and former CHAMPION vocalist Jim Hesketh was recently outed as a sexual predator. At least fifty women have shared stories, including general creepiness, rape, sex with minors (including recorded on a laptop), and so forth. This started at least fifteen years ago, and a *lot* of people knew that he, at the very least, had a pattern of questionable interactions with young women. I'm originally from the Northwest, and remember a conversation in 2003 where his bandmate Aram (who originally ran React! Records) was upset that there were "rumors" going around about Jim's behavior, but denied he would act this way, or that he would be in a band with someone who did. But as far as I know, neither he nor anyone else even so much checked in with Jim, let alone anyone who might have spoken up after he had pulled some shit with them. The only time I heard anything about his actions was when some ballcap-wearing asshat would say something like "Haha, Jim likes to make out with underage girls on tour," effectively treating these women as the disposable butt of a dude joke rather than as hardcore kids who should have been taken seriously and whose involvement in the scene should not have been held back by this overrated creep. Although I didn't hear anything more damning about Jim until only recently, and I and many others didn't realize just how deep this went, we are complicit. Although I was only peripherally involved with NWHC social circles and hated a lot of the personalities, I am complicit, too. But apologies and (self) righteous anger aren't enough. We need to fucking do better, especially those of us less likely to be affected by these things. Fuck what this record sounds like. It's time to react. (DG)
(React! / Refuse)

TRUE SONS OF THUNDER – "Spoonful Of Seedy Dudes" LP

Here 'tis! TRUE SONS OF THUNDER's debut LP repressed for your education and pleasure. These seedy dudes are from OBLIVIANS, MANGINA, RAT TRAPS, MANATEEES, and other infamous punks of Southern origin, so ya know it stinks fierce! A spoonful of their power is flat-out too dangerous a dose of piss-stream consciousness punk froth for mere mortals to handle! But dive in and marvel at "Tony Joe White"; the water's burnt orange and hot and fine! Fuzzy, crammed, from-the-hip punk that almost makes me cry because it's too perfect to exist in the same dimension as my horrible, unworthy ears/brain/face. A fine achievement in music! (MC)
(Jeth-Row)

TYRED EYES – "Arms 1 (Nothing Lasts)/Arms 2 (Measure)" 45

Fucking christ. Tepid-ass, mid-tempo indie rock from Sweden with sighing, breathy vocals that are reminiscent of Kim Gordon with half the heart or soul. It sounds like the background music at an Apple store or the opening band for INVSN. (GH)
(Lövely)

UK SUBS – "Friends And Relations" CD

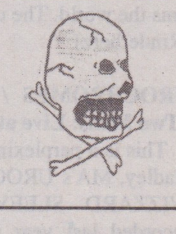
I've never been the hugest UK SUBS fan. That they have some amazing classic moments and the members were and continue to be huge influences and supporters of younger bands doesn't make the avalanche of shit material you have to wade through any less daunting. Here you get a collection of odds and ends that is only called a UK SUBS record as almost a cash-in on the name. The only proper UK SUBS tracks here are some lackluster barely finished sessions from the early 2000s of which "Product Supply" is the best—and it's really not that good. The CHARLIE HARPER and CAPTAIN SENSIBLE tracks are horrible blues based rock with "Kamera" offering the only interesting moments because of the shitty keyboards and dumb vocal effects. Next up are two 2015 URBAN DOGS songs—which is CHARLIE HARPER and KNOX from the VIBRATORS—which have a slightly folksy political edge to them that has my head nodding into deep slumber. Lastly you get NIKKI GARRATT and ALVIN GIBBS' 1980s synthpop band TARGET GENERATION, which while being the most interesting thing here, gives me a 30-plus year old hangover. I know some younger punkers have a nostalgic hard-on for this kind of garbage (like that shitty BLITZ record) but crap is crap. Put on "C.I.D" and have a day of it. For OCD SUBS completists only. Beware! (RO)
(Cleopatra)

UNCLE – "Digest to Survive" EP

In powerviolence circles in 2016, saying something sounds like MAN IS THE BASTARD is kinda like saying a punk band sounds like MINOR THREAT. What are you really trying to tell me? What this really sounds like to me is a far more serious I WILL KILL YOU FUCKER (how cool would it be if they had a track that was just organ though?) or an underdeveloped IRON LUNG. I also feel like this band has a message but I didn't receive a lyric sheet so I don't really know what it is other than I'm sure it has something to do with our diet/existentialism. There are some sick doom-y parts and a pretty meditative noise/feedback intro, which is tight. (MW)
(Dingleberry / Get Better / Reality is a Cult)

UNHAIM – "S'Bränt!" EP

UNHAIM is a band that could easily be labeled crust based on their politics and overall sound, but the songs here are mid-tempo hardcore punk through and through. The guitars are fuzzed-out and distorted, with urgent, gravelly, shouted



vocals. I like the structures of the songs, which are both melodic and make use of minor scales. The songs are way better than the cover would have you believe. I would think this is a record for people that like the band live—I don't see a mass appeal. Then again, did my opinion ever stop anyone from buying records? They do prove the fact that even within a 1,000 km distance from Berlin, the language is completely regional. I only can decipher about three words. Probably not even. Work, life, no plan. Money runs the world. The usual topics. (WK)
(Rinderherz)

UROCHROMES / WIZZARD SLEEVE – "Two Mens: Live at WFMU" split LP
This is a perplexing one. A live split between Hadley, MA's UROCHROMES and Alabama's WIZZARD SLEEVE, both radio sessions recorded last year and in *two thousand and nine*, respectively. Having live takes of these UROCHROMES cuts allows you to savor some of the finer things in their squirm-inducing brand of drum machine-backed hardcore: Jackie Boy's vocal ad libs (*"brrrrrr-ap!")*, Dick Riddick's signature licks. There are a couple tunes from the *Get in Line with Mental Decline* tape that didn't make it to the Lumpy Records EP. There's no bass player in the band on this session which keeps some transitions from landing with the weight I've come to anticipate after spinning their other recordings incessantly. The bar is high, but it's cool seeing it from another angle. WIZZARD SLEEVE's side sounds remarkably fresh for a radio session from seven (!) years ago, synth punk ("weird" punk?) coated in a healthy layer of grease. The shuffling lurch of "Rotten Hole" is just infectious. They sound at home in the WFMU studio, but at home isn't necessarily at ease—I can imagine them turning up the thermostat until the room is about 95 degrees and humid. Both these sides add up to a strange but very endearing record. (EW)
(Jeth-Row)

USELESS EATERS – "Relaxing Death" LP
Wooooooo...more nightmare music from the bad boys of USELESS EATERS. Very good. Smart man. Good band. Slower than they used to be but everyone grows older. This is also my favorite record I've heard from them. It's much more synth-y (synthetic???) than their past releases....listen, I like it, alright? They're a good band, buy the record, what fucking more do you want me to tell you? (BB)
(Castle Face)

USELESS ID – "We Don't Want the Airwaves" EP
The new EP from Israeli punkers USELESS ID fits right into the Fat Wreck Chords catalogue—any track could be a B-side for another Fat Wreck staple band. "We Don't Want The Airwaves" is a poppy, rhythmic stomper that is both a love song to the RAMONES and a eulogy for Brandon Carlisle (TEENAGE BOTTLE ROCKET), who died unexpectedly last November. This could believably be found on a CHIXDIGGIT or the LOVED ONES record. The two acoustic protest songs on the EP, "Right Wing Fascist Killing Spree" and "State Burning," wouldn't feel out of place on a Fat-era AGAINST ME! or RISE AGAINST release. The most apparent style borrowing is on the track "Tension," which I could have easily been convinced was an unreleased NO USE FOR A NAME ballad—USELESS ID has perfectly channeled Tony Sly's vocal style. (RH)
(Fat Wreck Chords)

VCR – "RIP Sportsboy" LP
An unrelentingly puerile and petulant cavalcade of hits from this Toronto crew. Electric piano and galloping drums dominate the mix here, with the occasional cowbell, slide whistle, or sample of fart noises. It sounds like the band has been nourished on an ethically sourced diet of 7-11 candy, SCREAMERS bootlegs, and daytime television. There are a lot of lyrics like "*We're VCR, you know who we are / We're VCR, Sportsboy guitar*." The songs flow in and out together, sequenced at about the same tempo one right after the other, making this a nightmare for a DJ trying to cue up the hits. Do you include the skit of Stephen Harper getting his pants pulled down by the band before spinning a banger like "Shut Up"? Do any other bands these days impersonate a sitting head of state? Is this a concept record? The energy is all the way up the whole way through, and many of these songs sound similar. There are songs I like a lot, but it's kind of exhausting sitting down for a whole LP of this. I kind of wish I could just watch this record performed live, loud and wild enough to get pulled into the pit despite my healthy inclination to avoid a carefree time at all costs. (EW)
(Barfbag / Murder City Video)

VIOLET & THE PONY – "Nasty Ol' Rock'n'Roll" EP
This is the fourth four-song EP from this St. Gallen, Switzerland-based band. The A-side does not inspire a lot of confidence and ends up plodding and unnecessarily lengthy. By the time you get to the B-side, things really pick up. "Bleed" offers an awesome combination of unique vocal pacing, multiple unexpected tempo shifts, and just a little bit of AT THE DRIVE-IN worship in the guitars. "Mr. Wong II" continues the fast-paced side B and the EP ends much more excitingly than it began. (RH)
(self-released)

WARCRY – "Savage Machinery" LP
Fuck, you read *MRR*, you should know what you're getting when it comes to WARCRY by now. Ten-plus years on and they're still dishing out top-shelf D-beat that hews pretty closely to the DISCHARGE path, delivered with passion and urgency by a gang of punk lifers. The solos might not be a flashy as Bones', but they're hard-hitting and well-placed, the bass playing is sublime, the drums are driving, and it's all topped off by the vocals that have appeared in half a dozen of your favorite bands. Due to repeated sabotage by the USPS, we got this a tad late, but it's still kicking around and like all their other releases is well worth picking up. (AU)
(self-released)

WILD MOHICANS – LP
The extended intro to "Polluted" that starts this banger sets the bar really high…hardcore punk rock'n'roll owing more to the Portland of yore than the modern sounds associated with that fine city. The guitars are on fire and you're getting pretty pumped, but you wonder how the rest of the record is gonna hold up once the vocals kick in and things really get rolling because, well…writing a killer intro ain't that hard y'all, it's following it up that can get kinda tricky. WILD MOHICANS do just fukkn fine, kids, nothing to fret about. Appropriately, the title track is the creamer of the crop (just a touch faster than the rest and the vocals have just a little more bite), but it's a bountiful crop filled with hints of POISON IDEA and maybe a few MOTÖRHEAD licks. An actual barnburner. (WN)
(Black Water)

WOOLF – "Posing/Improvising" 12"
WOOLF is a London punk band that reminds me of a collaboration between Y PANTS and SIEGE. They share members with FRAU, whose nontraditional hardcore is also a good point of reference for this 11 song 12" EP. Repetitive bass riffs periodically peek out of a curtain of distorted guitar. The lyrics are fragmentary, but the blank space is evocative. There's an undercurrent of disconnect in these songs, like the vocalist can't quite catch up in time to crush the stupidity and evil around her. I can relate. (SW)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

YESTERDAY'S HEROS – "La Llama Que Nunca Se Apaga" EP
From the mean streets and council flats of Medellín, Columbia, come these four blokes playing some slick punk/street rock. A little too slick and well-produced for these ears, treading into '90s Epitaph Records-esque skate punk territory far too often. Still, side one is some pretty good Oi! with "Dónde Están?" being the standout track. The singer has a nice gruff vocal style but it's a fine line between COCK SPARRER and PENNYWISE when it comes to melodic modern Oi! and these amigos fall towards the latter too much for my taste. Big points for keeping an Oi! / street rock scene going in South America. Keep at it, mates. (RO)
(Street Rock)

ZERODENT – LP
This record has the modern *Messthetics* vibe—thin guitars scratching out naive tunes in

minimal three-piece punk fashion. The songs carry on that dry, British DIY flavor—like SUBURBAN HOMES, but their looseness gives them away as Australian. They really hold a lot in common with TYVEK (even jocking a riff), but ZERODENT's approach is sunnier and less urgent. There's not a lot of teeth to their approach, a quality that can suit them well on the EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING slow burner "Reason" (a great track that went straight onto a mixtape!), but overall the vibes fall kind of bland and middle of the road, making me want a little more grit, a little more yelp, or a little more droning repetition—anything that would give it more of a discernable personality so I won't end up disregarding it as tame garage that's main redeeming quality is it might be a step in a good direction for someone who digs BLEACHED. (BW)
(Alien Snatch!)

V/A – "Genocide Express From Nowhere" CD

Yesssssss, Japan rippers united!! Nagoya shit-fi surf freaks SOCIAL PORKS, hardcore/thrash stalwarts TOAST (yeah, the band that did a split with SPAZZ in '96), face-melting crossover from CYCOSIS, blast beats and fastcore from BY-PASS, old school metallic hardcore from GAMY, and ADA wrapping the disc up with three *brilliant* pieces of melodic punk with some of the most bizarre and awesome vocals I've ever heard. I know CD comps are a dime a dozen…but then you come across something like this. So good. (WN)
(Hardcore Kitchen)

V/A – "Subnormal Girls: D.I.Y. / Post Punk 1979–1983, Volume One" LP

Excellent new—and very limited—sixteeen-song compilation of just what the title states. International in scope (Japan, Austria, Australia, Poland, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the US, and the UK all represented), casual fans will most likely only know a few names (PETTICOATS, CHANDRA) but if you are as enamored with propulsion and possibility as I am you will find much to like here. Post-punk is (and almost always has been!) a nearly meaningless term, but this compilation represents my favorite elements of that catch-all: expressive and idiosyncratic percussion that simultaneously keeps time and bends it, sinewy bass lines and tightly coiled guitars, the hypnotic genius sounds of a million girls chanting at once. I hope this record inspires people to dive deep into these bands—the ART OBJECT 7" is all killer no filler, JUNGLE NAUSEA should be in the pantheon of Portland bands (and you should mail me a copy of their 12"!), the wild cacophony of TOXIC SHOCK's interweaving vocals is the definition of joyful noise. I've seen a lot of discussion about how amazing it is that these kinds of similar sounds were being made in isolation all over the world. Of course that isn't true—the network of cultural exchange and inspiration that spawned this moment in time simply just hasn't been documented and all current self-styled punk historians should consider *why* bands this good have been written out of history (hint: it has something to do with the word "girl"). If you find yourself constantly comparing any band with women in it to KLEENEX, the RAINCOATS, or the SLITS, stop doing that right this second and buy a copy of this record. Our cultural foremothers are varied and many—let's start naming them. Volume Two on the way. (GA)
(Waiting Room)

V/A – "Turist I Tillvaron Vol. 9" LP

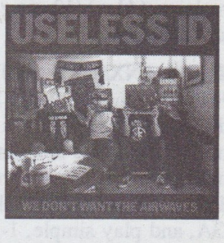
Well, I wouldn't have guessed I'd be listening to grindcore this month. Or this lifetime. But what do I know, anyway? This comp features a bunch of Swedish bands you've never heard of (I had only heard of one) and it's all over the place musically, but included under the umbrella genre of "punk," broadly conceived (one straight-up third wave ska song notwithstanding). I appreciate the spirit of inclusivity, but it does necessarily mean that not everything will float everyone's boat. In addition to the couple of tracks of aural destruction, this comp offers an assortment of hardcore, D-beat, pop punk, and more experimental garage-y punk. Some of the stand-out tracks for me were SHITFUCKS from Östersund who kind of remind me of KLEENEX, GROTESKHA from Gothenburg who I liken to HEALTH HAZARD, and Stockholm's TOXO, which has an early GORILLA ANGREB thing going on. Admittedly there is a lot of stuff I don't like on here but that would probably appeal to fans of hardcore/D-beat/crust. But the few redeeming tracks for me make it so I want to dig further back to the previous eight volumes of this comp to see what I've been missing. Booklet insert contains all the lyrics, mostly in Swedish, some in English. Maybe it's finally time for me to put down the HURULA record and get updated on what's crackin' in underground Swedish punk nowadays. Definitely worth a listen. (LT)
(Turist i Tillvaron)

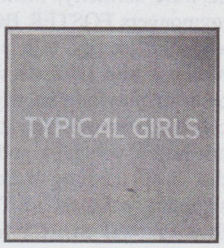
V/A – "Typical Girls" LP

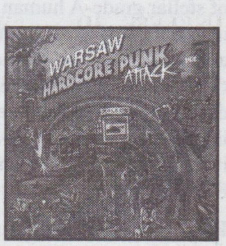
A survey of women in punk and DIY conducted by Camylle Reynolds who (full disclosure) is also an *MRR* shitworker. This features many genres: the 2 Tone style ska of the MEOW MEOWS, the raucous almost *Making Waves* comp meets CRASS style of PRIMETIME, the brat Dada of NOTS, the primal claustrophobic post-punk of RAKTA. Then there's the other side of post-punk represented by SHOPPING and SLUM OF LEGS, the open exploration of the legacy left by groups like RED KRAYOLA / LORA LOGIC / RAINCOATS etc. Tough rocker styles are repped by SF's own QUAALUDES and Finland's the SPLITS, who present an almost emo-esque song! I prefer their TESTORS-style jams. EARTH GIRLS, CHARM BAGS, FRAU, and STREET EATERS also get jammed into this compendium of wild "girl" sounds. Bands hail from all over, mostly the US and the UK, but there are a few notable European and South American contenders. Some of the songs are previously released (NOTS / SLUM OF LEGS), but it's cool to have them all in one place, time capsule style. This is a cool comp! My favorite songs were the aforementioned NOTS and SLUM OF LEGS hits, but I also loved the FRAU blast off—it made me wanna start fifty new bands, such a sick snarl of a song! Total deconstructed punk killer. The B.D. song was also totally raging, my favorite of theirs since the monumental "You Ain't Right." (LG)
(Emotional Response)

V/A – "Warsaw Hardcore Punk Attack Vol. 3" LP/CD

The current Warsaw scene presented in nineteen distinct movements. Highlights include WERWOLF 77, GOVERNMENT FLU (coming to the USA this summer—stoked), BROOKS WAS HERE, and STREET LIGHTS. Quality is overwhelmingly good, and everything from beatdown hardcore to classic CLASH-styled punk to fast modern HC, Oi!, and melodic *(read: pop)* punk is in here. A pleasant number of tracks assailing macho bullshit and racism, so extra points for that. (WN)
(No Pasaran)







DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Matt Badenhop, Heather Blotto, Robert Collins, Michael de Toffoli, Greg Harvester, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, Alex Turner, and Jason Ryan.

ALPHA STRATEGY – *Drink the Brine, Get Scarce* – I put this on and thought it was a good SHELLAC tribute. Then I looked at it and noticed that Steve Albini recorded it. As a result these songs sound great, and upon further listening, this sophomore album is more than just Albini-worship. It might start there, but I can hear PIL and the BIRTHDAY PARTY. Art rock for art rockers. (Alex) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, alphastrategy.net)

THE ANXIETY JUNKIES – *Gentrified Homicide* – One would hope that a band with a demo cover depicting a cop shooting a woman in the face while dragging her by her hair would have a lyric sheet, but we're shit outta luck here. The ANXIETY JUNKIES are from Savannah, GA, and play simple, 1-2-1-2 punk with blown-out vocals. It's that kind of stuff that is good, but I have a hard time latching onto it because there's nothing that sets it apart. No real hooks. The sound of solid state amps and some angry dudes. I can say that the drummer does some wacky-ass shit that is truly engaging, though. The cover smells like a vape pen and I think that is relevant. (Greg) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, anxietyjunkies.bandcamp.com)

BIG BABY – *If You're Not A Baby, You're Too Old* – The world is fucking terrible and people can be so horrible. But surviving in such a shitty world and helping others to survive in it is so important. That's what this is the soundtrack to. Alternately, this is a project between two friends who thought it would be cool to play instruments that they aren't experts at and see what happened because *fun*. Both members of this duo are, or were formerly, members of SLC post-punk joymongers FOSTER BODY, and while there is a similar energy, this is its own distinct entity. Madison and Dyana's vocals can support each other or playfully/angrily leap back and forth in call and response. The song structures are simple but heavy, sonically and emotionally. The thing that keeps coming back to me is that this has so many parallels to TENDER BUTTONS or SORRY NOT SORRY from the Bay, both bands of stellar grade-A human Erica Botz, may she rest in peace. It is amazing that such powerful, raw, angry, and honest threads can echo throughout the universe and manifest and be heard in such different, or like, manners. Make no mistake, it is a blessing. (Sean) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, 370 E Harrison Ave, Salt Lake City, UT 84115)

BITTER, INC. – *Initiation* – Electronic project with some cool beats and synth solos, occupying the industrial end of the electronic spectrum. The lyrics touch on pesudo-political conspiracy theory topics as well as personal themes. There's something undeniably silly about artists who appear to be taking themselves way too seriously. The beats are so good that it's kind of a bummer that the vocals are so hard to get down with. The cover says, "If you have a problem with it, please reference the first amendment," which is fun cause the first amendment also protects freedom of the press—or anyone really—to talk shit. (Heather) (9-song CD-R, lyrics not included, reverbnation.com/bitterinc)

BLACK MONUMENTS – *III* – "Ordinary People" is straight up *the* anthem for 2016. And then these Michigan synth punk freaks follow that up with an entire demo packed with outsider anthems. Bass / keys / drums madness, these mutants are producing on an entirely different level. If you want your punk to feel like a time warp and a black hole and a drug induced journey at the same time (these are all things you should want) but you still want hardcore (this is also a thing you should want) then I suggest ingesting BLACK MONUMENTS. If that other track is the anthem of the year, then "Trapped" is probably the creamer of the month. *Killer*. (N Robert) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, blackmonuments.bandcamp.com, PO Box 3734, Grand Rapids, MI 49501)

BOOJI BOYS – It's hard for me to talk about poppy, melodic punk and make it sound appealing to people these days, but this is fucking good. Like, there's melodic punk and then there's a step above…where the band just congeals together with swift soaring bass lines and the occasional "cinematic" chord and a lot of energy. It's like trying to explain to someone why they should like the BANANAS or CONEHEADS. Like, these people are into DEVO (duh), but they probably also like the ONLY ONES, LIQUIDS, and KBD-style bullshit. It works. This tape rules. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, boojiboysfuneral.bandcamp.com)

BRONCO LIBRE – Clean guitars jangle incessantly, stabbing their hooks into your skin while the vocals take what should by all rights be a collection of catchy crooners and make these songs sharp and demanding. Everything is fast and insistent, and the tracks are superb. Take Bay Area early '10s darlings NEON PISS as a very complimentary comparison, and note that BRONCO LIBRE also owe a debt to the sharp, stark Deutschpunk bands from the '80s. A shame we are just getting your eyes on this 2014 demo now, but it's worth the hunt. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, broncolibre.eu)

THE BROOD – *October Dreams* – Totally blazing new offering from these Philly hardcore veterans. I can see the spit flinging off Ned's lip and sticking to some hardcore fiend's stupid face. The sound on here is *massive*. So much more crushing than your average modern hardcore record. These tracks have the stature and power often heard in Japanese hardcore, with some of the ugliness and passion of the Kings of Punk from the Northwest. You may have seen one or more of these folks in LOST CAUSE, WITCH HUNT, or ENDLESS NIGHTMARE in the past, but now the BROOD demand your attention. Put this shit on a 12". (Matt) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, filthybrood.blogspot.com)

THE BROONIES – *Foods Co* – More basement / bedroom pop from the ever-prolific BROONIES, who I assume have now moved from San Francisco out to the edge of Yosemite. Maybe the move has reduced some anxiety because the band feels more laidback and folksy, but no less catchy and direct. If there's one thing I've come to expect from this band, it's that I shouldn't have any expectations. Every release feels like a different band, but that band is always good. Sometimes it's kinda like hardcore, but this time it's kinda like SEBADOH and NEIL YOUNG. Tight. (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, aaronfreif@gmail.com, aaronfreifeld.bandcamp.com)

THE BROONIES – *More Bros* – Please see my other review of this band for context. On this release, they're reaching for some raw, organ-driven pop in the style of BEACH BOYS with call and response choruses and catchy riffs. There have been no duds from this band yet. (Greg) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, aaronfreif@gmail.com, aaronfreifeld.bandcamp.com)

CELL BLOCK – *Eight* – Brooding ethereal punk from the vast Northern California region dubbed "Jefferson" by the smattering of punks that are giving birth to one of the more intriguing regional scenes in the US. These tracks are lumbering and often awkward, but driven by confident vocals and a keen sense for constructing a good track. Reference early SIOUXSIE and COCTEAU TWINS (less punch than the former, more rock than the latter) if you like to be guided…I look forward to the next offering. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, 781 1/2 E 5th St, Chico, CA 95928, xeroxrecordshc.bandcamp.com)

COMMUNITY – Yes! COMMUNITY hails from Sheffield, UK, and plays gnarly, skuzzy hardcore with a singer who is 100% "going for it" at all times, a total vocal cord ripper. All the songs rule but I can't get the closer "Community"

out of my head, which starts off with a snaking, repetitive, mid-tempo riff that builds and builds to a breakneck speed at the end. It just sounds totally destructive. Fucking solid demo. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, thepunkcommunity.bandcamp.com)

CONTROL GROUP – Holy. Shit. At first I thought this was just a noise act, distortion over distortion piled upon distortion…but there's a hardcore band buried under this shit. Talk about pushing the limits—CONTROL GROUP could market themselves to power electronics freaks and the noise not music set, pure power USHC manipulated to total other world status. On the second listen, it's great…on the third it's transcendent. Ten points for concept and an extra few for execution. (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, controlgroup1.bandcamp.com, PO Box 3734, Grand Rapids, MI 49501)

DIAMOND GUTS – *Short Rips* – These short songs (all but one are two minutes or less) nail the feeling and sound of '90s slacker rock heroes like SEBADOH and PAVEMENT. Those are the bands that helped me through high school and I can't tell if these songs are just a little flat or I'm just resistant to anything that reminds me of trying to survive high school. (Alex) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, secretawesomerecords.bandcamp.com, secretawesomehq@gmail.com, PO Box 1144, North Falmouth, MA 02556)

DISIPLINE – *Sexual Heathen* – A hot and steamy punk mess of a tape here. If MISFITS were less homophobic and way more homoerotic and sex positive, they may have cum off more like DISIPLINE. The songs have a strong pulse and distorted but sung vocals (less croon than Danzig), and a very simple and familiar riff repertoire. Recurring lyrical themes include, but are not limited to, sex (rough and soft), consent, BDSM, and references to evil shit like Satan and ghosts. I can't help but think of that old project with Dave Dictor and Pig Champion called the SUBMISSIVES where the whole record was about female domination, though DISIPLINE is very intentional in their non-binary gender stance. The music is even similar in a lot of ways, though I'm fairly certain it's a coincidence. "*So now I'm older, and this is how I dress—in a thong and a garter, and a motherfuckin' punk vest*." Respect. (Matt) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, disipline.bandcamp.com)

DISPOSSESSED – *Besieged* – Relentless repetition, monotonous doom, savage sludge. There are no frills here, but Portland's DISPOSSESSED go hard right out of the gate and never let up. There's divine beauty in a pure pummeling, you know? Occasionally the pace drops to a painful slog and guitar melodies take over…but that's as nuanced as *Besieged* gets. Fans of GRIEF, NOOTHGRUSH, etc. will want to take note. (Robert) (3-song cassette, lyrics included, dispossessed.portland@gmail.com, endtheoryrecords.com, 5802 N. Mississippi Ave, Portland, OR 97217)

DOMINO AND THE DERELICTS – Yo, this band compared *themselves* to the DISTILLERS and I would say that is apt. Being that I *actually like* that band, I think this is good. It's rough around the edges and the raspy vocals also remind me of pre-major label HOLE. It's super catchy in that '90s pogo punk / pop punk way. (Greg) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, sjchoppers@yahoo.com, 1432 48th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94122)

FELCHERS – Very accessible and upbeat hardcore. It sounds like they're coming from fun time punk rock and have worked their way up into hardcore. He's yelling at you with autobiographical and storied lyrics about fucking up and not being accepted, so he has that guard up. The song "Who's Gonna Fuck Your Mother When I'm Gone" is really showing the rebellion and the acceptance of failure to fit into this life. He is not your friend and he doesn't want you to think that he's your friend, but the music is friendly, comforting, and happy. Musically it's fun, banger, high-energy party music that draws you into being happy, with dismissive vocals that make you feel dirty for enjoying yourself in the first place. (Michael) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, felchers.bandcamp.com)

GEIGER COUNTER – *Fear Tomorrow* – Oh yeah. Pure and brutal crust in the '90s American tradition. Think STATE OF FEAR, DISRUPT, HAIL OF RAGE…if you get the drill then you need to be running for this. Thunderous bursts of power presented with a room filling bombasity. Killer. (Robert) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, desolaterecordsmpls@gmail.com, 2516 Lyndale Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55405)

GOO FISH – Drum machine and slightly punked-up-yet-tame blues riffs with a dude almost doing a rap rock vibe over the top of it. The first song says "*Smoking crack and drinking beer. At least you know I'm not a queer*." Dude, if you think gay people don't do those things, I've got some news for you. As this progresses, he gets more into noise rock and flange-driven bass with whispered vocals. "Two Gay Dudes on A Farm" wins for best song title, but…you know…it's terrible. (Greg) (12-song CD-R, lyrics included, jcspann@msn.com)

HASTE – Short. Fast. Tight. Solid, straightforward riffs. More fast(er). Three dudes singing and one in particular sounds like he needs to get his throat looked at by a professional. A band who knows the value of a killer intro. Total hardcore creamer—nothing more, nothing less. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, savageerarecords@gmail.com, hastect.bandcamp.com, 5713 Warrington Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143)

HEARTLESS FOLK / MFB – *This Is It Split* – Both bands are proudly flying the East Bay pop punk flag but are going in different directions. HEARTLESS FOLK has that '90s pop punk emo sound, with bright bass leads and guttural shouting vocals with a lot of heart and emo-tion. MFB have many pop punk tendencies but they're definitely a hardcore band, with thrash vocals, blitzing guitars, and a really popping loud snare that sells their pop punk side. It's not minor key or harsh, it's expedited hardcore that still has that East Bay gloss. The two of them complement each other well. Hella good music to skate to. (Michael) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, heartlessfolk.bandcamp.com, mfbforthewin.bandcamp.com)

INTREPID HEARTS – First tape from this Minneapolis outfit features can't-put-it-down catchy guitar riffs and vocals that channel the passion and melody of Ivy's singing in MIAMI or BLACK RAINBOW. (Although that might have something to do with the recording—pushing the tape so hard it maxes out at like half the singer's volume, which is a sick style). Everyone in this band is a shredder. All the passion of SNUGGLE or DRUNKEN BOAT with the guitar riffs of SUPERCHUNK or THIN LIZZY. It's as if crust-pop finally met up with region rock, and we're all standing around slack-jawed at how it took so long for this to happen because it's obviously such a good idea. (Heather) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, intrepidhearts.bandcamp.com)

THE JIM TABLOWSKI EXPERIENCE – *Should We Make It XXXtraCreamy??* – Fast snappy German pop punk. Sometimes reminds me of the DEAD MILKMEN or if NOFX kept the hooks and the vocal melodies but played barnburning garage punk instead of…well, whatever it is NOFX plays. Unless you're really jaded, this shit will creep under your skin. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, hugemajorlabel.com, jimtablowski.bandcamp.com, 126 N Franklin St, Madison, WI 53703)

LOA HEX – *Orphan Cuts* – The faster cuts remind me of ZIPPER or even Bay Area's LOST GOAT (for those who get the reference, the vocals are totally strong enough to warrant the association). Sharp rock'n'roll cuts with a punk edge, but the kind of punk edge that true '60s/'70s rippers had by accident. The lower tracks are still engaging, but have more of a '90s alt rock vibe ("Never Fade" could've been a college radio smash single in 1993). Recorded in '14 but just released this year. (Robert) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, LoaHex.com, WFBRecords.com)

MEDICATION – *Family Affirmations* – I wish these sounds had been in my life 25 years ago when things were drenched with college/alt and indie sounds and it was the same as punk because I didn't know any better. The shit is *good*—just a dude, an acoustic guitar, and some noisemaking devices crafting really good outsider pop tunes. If this was then, then I would probably say MEDICATION sounded like Kevin Shields aping some under the radar '60s psych/folk artist I was pretending to be familiar with….and, honestly, I probably would have been pretty spot on. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, csiterecordings.com)

MINDFRAME – This band has a similar guitar tone to SUBHUMANS (UK) and a singer who sounds a little like a cross between Marissa from SCREAMING FEMALES and Poly Styrene. Simple yet effective and energetic 1-2-1-2 punk/ska. (Greg) (5-song CD-R, lyrics included, mindframe.bandcamp.com)

MURDER FOR GIRLS – *All the Wishes* – Punk-tinged '90s alt-rock in the vein of the BREEDERS, THROWING MUSES, and the THERMALS. Catchy, hooky, and melodic. (Greg) (10-song CD-R, lyrics not included, murderforgirls.bandcamp.com)

MYAKKA – Brand new D-beat from Tallahassee, FL. Strong vocals and big riffs. The only time it loses me is when a later song takes a turn into black metal. The B-side of the tape is the A-side in reverse, which I can't get enough of. (Sean) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, myakka.bandcamp.com, deathpoem.bigcartel.com, 218 Broward St, Apt 3, Tallahassee, FL 32301)

NATURE BOYS – *2016 Tape* – Spikey Greg has had this tape in his pack for weeks, so who knows where it's been? He wouldn't shut up about it. I gave him an extra 40 to try and get him to pass out but he was so amped up on NATURE BOYS that I finally gave it a listen. So glad that I did. NATURE BOYS are one of the best current bands and this tape is no exception. They play straight ahead garage/punk with all the sincerity and passion of DEAD MOON. If that isn't enough for you to check this out, I dunno what the fuck is wrong with you. You'll be yelling along next to the fire with anthems like "Scum Like Us" and crying in your drink along to "Bent Again." Recommended. (Alex) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, natureboysrocknroll.com, 4000 Forest Ave, Kansas City, MO 64110)

NEOSPASM – *Tape #2* – Fronted by a wicked high end snarl, Austin's NEOSPASM rips through tension-filled hardcore. Fast, fist-banging, loose and nasty guitars whirring like crazy. Good shit. (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, neospasm.bandcamp.com, 1719 Hillcrest Ln, Austin, TX 78721)

NIGHT WITCH – "*I am angry without a second thought! I am angry without guilt! Apology not accepted!*" The song rips out of the stereo at me with desperate abandon. I could let those lyrics be my whole review of this cassette, but let's not end there; NIGHT WITCH is an hardcore band with uncompromising lyrics and vocals that erupt out of singer Rosie Richeson like a flamethrower duct taped to a grenade launcher in an alien hive queen's throne room. Mosh music to kill the bro in your head to. (Sean) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, nightwitchfl.bandcamp.com, forkniferecords.tictail.com, 218 Broward St Apt 3, Tallahassee, FL 32301)

OIL WAVE SURFERS – *II* – Some dudes got lit and fukkd around with a recording setup in the mid-'00s and made some really really sick psych / freak out / garage jammers and then passed them around to their friends until someone heard it and was all like "Nah, fools. This ain't 'for your friends' good, this shit is like 'for the *public* good'" and released these recordings for general consumption. You'll thank that person when you let OIL WAVE SURFERS take you on a keyboard drenched garagepunksurfpsych journey of a lifetime. (Robert) (?-song cassette, lyrics not included, csiterecorings.com)

PAINT THINNER – I kinda hoped that this would be some fucked noize by some crazed kids who huff paint thinner. This doesn't seem to be the case. Sounds more like adults who have jobs and know how to play their instruments. All four songs are slow rockers with post-punk / psych parts. I bet they kill it live and a better recording would serve them well. Reminds me of WIRE, URINALS, and NUDITY. They look like they are a pretty active part of the Detroit scene—members also play in FRUSTRATIONS, FONTANA, TERRIBLE TWOS, and HUMAN EYE. (Alex) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, paintthinner.bandcamp.com, 1415 Parker St #966, Detroit, MI 48214)

THE PINK BOLTS – *Sex Gym* – Pure freakazoid synth-driven New Wave. This could be the band on the stage in The Club scene in any number of '80s movies….it's dark and smoky and the preppy girl isn't supposed to be out with The Bad Crowd and the robotic keys pound out a bizarro solo while our star looks terrified, surrounded by punks and weirdos. That's what the PINK BOLTS sound like. Too punk for some PET SHOP BOYS nonsense (I love *Please*, but don't tell), but way too normal to compare to the NORMAL or SUICIDE. I'm fukkn way into this. (Robert) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, 1729 12th Ave #210, Seattle, WA 98122)

PURE PRESSURE – *Ya Better Get It Right* – I'm always really glad when tapes with shouting emotional vocals come with lyrics because you really get an entirely new side to the music. PURE PRESSURE is melodic and consistently paced hardcore from Toronto. It's well balanced with guitar, bass, and drums accelerating at the same intensity, making a fierce foundation for poetic vocals. The vocals latch onto a theme or a metaphor more than fitting into a poetic measure, so the message is the most important thing. It's written for anyone that's been disregarded or disrespected or dumped, anyone that's been in a rough situation or relationship or any setting where someone that you've cared about is keeping you down. When she shouts "*Tell me what it's like / life without a spine / cuz I'll never forget / when you broke mine*" on the song "Ogden Point," she's brutally honest in her strength but still reeling from the situation. It's not necessarily coming from a place of a strong acceptance or recovery, it's coming from a place of looking back in anger at the cage that you were kept in. One of the best that I've heard in a while. (Michael) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, purepressure.bandcamp.com)

QUAALUDES – *Rejects* – QUAALUDES is easily one of San Francisco's hardest working punk bands. I've run into their drummer schlepping all of her gear to shows on public transit. This tape is a rough practice space recording of new shit that I hope will get better recordings in the future. For the uninitiated, QUAALUDES plays fierce, driving punk with a singer who has a similar commanding presence as Poly Styrene (but not the same voice, if that makes sense). On this tape, the band lets their guard down and is treading into slightly more experimental territory which will be an interesting and welcome thing to see in the future. This release feels like a weird glimpse into a band's creative process. Good shit! (Greg) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, quaaludesband@gmail.com, quaaludes.bandcamp.com,)

RALF – *Ralf Is Not Whatever* – This tape is all over the place but goes a lot of cool places. There are some nearly post-punk songs where the same lyrics just repeat over and over, reminiscent of DELTA 5, some fast songs bordering on hardcore with screamy singing, and a couple high energy pop punk anthems that sound like they'd be at home in the southeast US in like 2004. The band is from Andalucia, Spain. The lyrics are in English and don't totally make sense. They manage to maintain some level of wholesomeness while talking about necrophilia, which is a feat in itself. (Heather) (14-song cassette, lyrics included, ralfmalaga.bandcamp.com)

RENCOR – You can't just casually listen to RENCOR. The shit is manic and all over the place, start / stop grind / powerviolence with more parts and changes in one song than most bands need on an entire record. And when they go fast…? They go *fast*. And when they go slow…? You're getting crushed. Whirlwind double bass for the mosh parts, but always returning to the blasts. Ripper. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, rencor.bandcamp.com)

SCARECROW'S CURSE – *Succubus* – There's a whole world of dudes wearing corpse paint and playing metal-influenced horror punk with Guitar Center-style solos. Fretboard acrobatics, splash cymbals, "spooky" vocals, and following the script of the horror punk genre. I suspect there is an audience for this, but I've never met those people…ever…and I grew up in Alabama. (Greg) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, contact@scarecrowscurse.com, facebook.com/scarecrowscurse)

SCULPTURE CLUB – *A Place To Stand* – This is sort of melancholic pop punk with that goth chorus pedal guitar sound, JAPANTHER fuzzy bass, and Robert Smith vocals. That sonic palette is a little confusing to these ears, but is certainly unique. (Sean) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, 370 E Harrison Ave, Salt Lake City, UT 84115)

7-10 SPLIFF – *King of the Lanes* – Do you like bowling? Do you like weed? Do you like crossover thrash that leans more on the metal side of the fence? Have I got a motherfucking treat for you! It sounds dumb (and it *is* dumb), but the riffs are on point…not unlike the feeling of mid-'80s COC and late '80s DRI…and they do what they do really well. What more can I say? It doesn't take the place of the VOMIT SPOTS' "I Want to Bowl" as the best punk bowling song, but they give them a run for their (non-existent) money. (Greg) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, 7-10spliff.bandcamp.com)

SICK FATE – Now we're talking. You've got driving dark UK-styled shits with perfect '80s New Wave/punk guitar melodies, but the party is led by tough as nails vocals and a relentless pace. Perfect for Oi! apologists and goth punk

revivalists alike…but way better than either of those potentially dismissive descriptors would imply. Power of early FUCKED UP, hooks of later BLITZ, guitars ripped from the second SIGNAL LOST platter. This one bangs hard and you can dance to it. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, sickfate.bandcamp.com, 1719 Hillcrest Ln, Austin, TX 78721)

SISTER DISASTER – Finnish post-punk with a dark, smoky, chorus-laden atmosphere that's calming and almost goth, but with ferocious vocals. Her cry is emotional and sincere, then rips up into a scorching wretch that cuts through everything to sit on top of this calm and pleasantly dark bed of music. It's calm and collected aggression that is both beautiful to chill out to and fierce enough to keep you vexed. (Michael) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, sisterdisaster.bandcamp.com)

SOGGY CREEP – Dipped in '90s USDIY emotional basement punk, this Washington (State) outfit dish out the lazy guitars and the crooning with total (and endearing) confidence. The target is blatant, the aim is true, and the presentation is superb. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, sog.gy/creep, 1104 Bethel NE, Olympia, WA 98506)

STARRY NIGHTS – On one hand, I will acknowledge that this is really good, but I don't think any ounce of my brain can handle incredibly sunny-sounding, earnest pop punk anymore. It's politically conscious. It's really, really catchy. The lyrics are strong and depict deep emotional conflicts that we all find ourselves in. I feel STARRY NIGHTS would fit comfortably on a show with RVIVR, WORRIERS, and PS ELIOT. That's where we're at here. (Greg) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, starrynights.bandcamp.com)

STEFAN CHRISTENSEN – *Empty Continents* – An ultra-interesting collection of heavy monotonous jams, psychedelic / acoustic tracks, ambient noise, and expertly crafted indie / shoegaze. And it's all the product of one fellow. Sometimes locking yourself in your bedroom with a four-track (or a laptop—do people even use analog 4-tracks anymore?) actually pays off. (Robert) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, csiterecordings.com)

STINGER – Fist-banging D-beat that keeps trying (failing) to keep their rock'n'roll tendencies at bay. That bouncing churn the Swedes have trademarked? These New Jersey punks *nail* it. Lurches and hiccups in "By The Fang" give way to effortless Fast Eddie licks while the low end just keeps churning. And when they switch to the four-on-the-floor 1-2-1-2 in "Husk Life" and conjure up the most primitive early black/ death metal? Oh yeah, you're partying. Total sleeper here, no studs or mohawks on the cover, and no bullshit inside. Do it. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, mbernknopf@gmail.com, stingernj.bandcamp.com)

TEENAGE STRANGERS – Very passionate doomy bruiser hardcore that sludges into your veins, and it's all a foundation to some of the most honest and powerfully storied lyrics that I've ever heard. Dual female vocalists that sound like they're reading out of a journal covering misogyny, sexual assault, and general aggression that women can face in the hardcore scene. Songs like "Battleground" have extremely well-written and honest lyrics like "*They say your body is a temple / but it feels more like a battleground / when you're fighting off strangers and neighbors / hands underneath tables and at shows.*" They're sending this message very clear and very unfiltered, and the delivery of words is so unhindered, not hiding behind poetic meter or metaphor. They're not sacrificing their message for anything. (Michael) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, teenage-strangers.bandcamp.com)

TROIKA – Driving all-female hardcore punk trio from Madrid. Classic high-energy 1-2-1-2 beat (but with a notable swing) and a no-bullshit approach to riff and song construction. Three chords, three vocalists, verse / chorus / repeat. Sometimes right doesn't have to be hard. The effect is immediate, especially when the gang vocals kick in, and it's easy to imagine a sweaty room going fukkn bonkers while they play. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, troikapunk.bandcamp.com)

U.H.N.B. – An improvisational lo-fi bedroom recording self-described as, "Not meant to be played live or rehearsed relearned/unlearned." Experimenting and getting free with noise, light/fuzzy feedback, guitars, drum machine, samples, singing, and playing around with the four-track tape speed knob to get some strange pitch-bending effects. It's unexpectedly comforting. The tape hiss is almost white noise. It's definitely directionless and oscillates between being touchingly vulnerable to soft, pretty, tripped-out noise. The B-side is blank so there's plenty of space for you to make your own DIY experimental songs to go along with it. (Heather) (?-song cassette, lyrics not included, buguskids1@yahoo.com)

UNREAL THOUGHT – This is a two-song cassingle from these Nova Scotia post-punkers / deathrockers. The thing I like about this is that their vocals aren't trying to be "spooky" or affected…it's just straight ahead punk and the guitars are direct and angular….more GANG OF FOUR than a punk BAUHAUS. Two solid, direct songs here, but I want more. Lucky for me and you they have a lot more to offer than this. (Greg) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, unrealthought.bandcamp.com)

VICE MINDED – Idiotic, misogynistic, trying-hard-to-be-offensive-but-just-boring-style bar punk. Check it out: they like beer and getting laid. They can throw a couple of chords together. What-the-fuck-ever. (Greg) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, 787 38th Ave, San Francisco, CA 94121, reverbnation.com/viceminded)

WOTZIT – I just want to say that when the very first note of this demo played, I said "Hell yeah!" out loud. It's hard to explain what is going on here, and I might be compelled to use terms like angular and post-punk, but it's so much more than that. What if KATRA TURANA had a harder edge? What if Fred Frith played guitar in a punk band? I'm always compelled by a band that can make their music sound simultaneously out of control and reigned in, much like MELT BANANA (but this is not MELT BANANA). It's almost like prog, but too nailed down and still straight ahead. I can't recommend this enough. This is their second tape and now I'm tracking down the first one. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, wotzit.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Dos Días de Colectividad XVI: Recopilación Bandas Participantes 1990–2015* – This is a raw and atrocious, anguished compilation. This is insane fury en Español on every track. Huge offering in a gorgeous box set: D-beat, raw hardcore, death metal, ska, blackened noise, tribal New Wave, folk interludes, bludgeoning heavy punk, total heart anthems, and all sorts of solidarity, I want to punch my face but I won't. I don't understand what they are saying! This is an exclusive feeling because it is right here in the heart and that is where punk lives. It is easy to feel excluded, though we all love this so much. There are so many levels of hippie culture and punk hardcore culture but there is absolutely no information on this special box set. I would definitely recommend trying to get this in your world. (Jason) (2-cassette box set, lyrics not included, kitschdelalma@hotmail.com)

V/A – *Live at Second Empire Philadelphia* – I love comps like these…the comps that try to encapsulate a glimpse at a scene while it's still happening rather than through the haze of nostalgia. All of the tracks here were recorded live at the DIY venue Second Empire and all the proceeds from the sales of the tape go directly to the space. There are too many bands on here (24!) to go into great detail on each one, but if you're familiar with current DIY bands like DARK THOUGHTS, LATEX, CHONDRIA, HALDOL, POLLEN, TOSKA, DRONEZ, BLANK SPELL, and FUCK SS, you know what you're getting yourself into. It's a good blend of desperate, fucked up hardcore and bare bones, straightforward punk. All of the live recordings are slightly muddy sounding, but I like it. It's nice and loud and you can clearly hear all the shit happening. Lo-fi or die! Good shit. Eight thumbs up! (Greg) (48-song cassette, lyrics not included, maceistheplace.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *VC Mixtape #1* – Collection of bands that Oakland's VIOLENCE CREEPS seem to endorse, since they slapped their name on the damn thing. SISTER FUCKER, HUMAN WASTE, EYELINER, NOTHING BAND, and a few others mingle with garage indie freaks VIOLENCE CREEPS, who drop a half dozen or so of their own bangers into the mix. "Sex Dwarf" is pure cream (almost sad that the best song on the tape is the opener, but we punkers do have short attention spans, so there's that…). Highly recommended for freaks and mutants. (Robert) (20-song cassette, lyrics not included, c/o violencecreeps.bandcamp.com)

ZINES

Send zines for review to:
Maximum Rocknroll
PO Box 460760
San Francisco, CA 94146

Reviewers:
(AP) Ari Perezdiez
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EC) E. Conner
(JB) Julia Booz
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix
(RB) Rory Britt
(SW) Shivaun Watchorn

AB #19
$2
If you ever dwell on typewritten wing-nut poetry with no punctuation and missing keys that force the author to use cryptic symbology, this zine is for you. What's that? You'd like a dash of localized conspiracy, anti-smart phone rants, and info on Lyme's Disease? Well search no further. Lisa has been putting out *AB* for years now as the companion to their other zine *Dwelling Portably*. Both are investigations of a lonely kind of back-to-the-land-manship. *AB* doesn't disappoint. (EC)
PO Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324

ACROSS THE GREAT DIVIDE: A TOUR DIARY OF SORTS
41 pgs
A trip from Victoria, BC to Houston and back, as experienced by the drummer of grindcore band Six Brew Bantha. His writing is descriptive without being overly wordy, and he has a knack for contextualization. If I were a teacher, I'd give this a solid B. I gotta say, he had my attention the most when he was talking about food or natural beauty. The photos are blurry, mostly too low lit, and ultimately unnecessary. (DG)
2726 Prior St, Victoria, BC V8T 3Y1, CANADA

BOBBY PINS
50 pgs
A French fanzine with interviews, a recipe, stories, drawings, and reviews. The author talks about having a rough 2015, choosing to take medication, heartbreak, her cat, and wanting to move. The interviews with Big Eyes, Gasmask Terror, and the distro Crapoulet are interesting and well done. The whole zine is laid out well—full of pictures and cute illustrations. (MR)
boredtodeathradio@gmail.com / bobby-pins.tumblr.com

COOL HISS #2
$2 / 12 pgs
This zine is comprised of three interviews ranging from punk to noise. The tone is very conversational and reading these feels like eavesdropping. It's alright, but the layout and stapling job is dismal. (MM)
bebaynes@gmail.com

DEEP FRIED #7
$1 / 24 pgs
This zine is a love letter to fast food, something I could write a thesis on if asked. The aesthetic is kind of quirky and vintage looking. Haikus about salt addiction, a fake menu dedicated to Led Zeppelin, and interviews with the bands Tongue Party and Nobunny. It's a buck and definitely worth at least a good skim if not for the fast food related artwork. (RB)
2901 Yosemite Ave, St Louis Park, MN 55416

DEEP FRIED #8
$1 / 26 pgs
Among the many curiosities this zine inspires, the one that hit the top of my list is that this goofy fast food love letter has made it up to issue number eight. That's a lot of content to be centered around mega-corporations. From the American flag featured on the back cover to the oddly identical band interviews, I mean, fuck, where does this leave me? I get that it's all a joke, but as a humorless vegan I'm not who underwrites the laugh track. One of the questions is "If you were to sell out to a fast food chain, which one would you pick? Which song would you give them?" That's actually a great question, removed from the context of every single thing about this zine being about fast food. Oh, vast umbrella of punk. I believe this is the garage sector and I think they maybe identify with the DIY part and maybe some of the fashion. I guess I'll say that it's funny, or it's supposed to be, that there is a breakfast and toilet paper pairings section that tells you what toilet paper to use depending on what breakfast product you consume—McDonald's / White Castle / Taco Bell / Sonic / Whataburger versus Charmin / Cushelle / Great Value / Cottonelle / Brawny. So you know what you're getting into. I can very much appreciate fake ads, but otherwise I don't have the patience to keep looking at this. (JB)
2901 Yosemite Ave, St Louis Park, MN 55416

DEGENERATE #18
$8 (free to prisoners) / 72 pgs
Degenerate #18 is dedicated to Justin Clifford Rhody's Vernacular Visions, which is an ongoing presentation of found photographs. There's an opening reprinted piece about Rhody followed by reproductions of the flyers for the Oakland event—projections originally held guerrilla-style at Lake Merritt and then at various other places around town to this day. I've never been to Vernacular Visions, but this collection makes it seem very compelling. The flyers are eye-catching and reproduced on the left facing page, while the central (presumably found) photo featured on the flyer is shown sans flyer information on the right. It's a good approach that lets you appreciate and contextualize the photo's use in the flyer and also examine the fascinating photos of people's everyday weird lives. I'm not a fan of the Old English script used by Vernacular Visions, but I looked past that quickly because I genuinely liked what was happening with this zine. With "our" punk / etc. culture rapidly changing in the face of social media, smartphones, chemtrails and bandcamps, flyers are something that I really treasure. I miss them being more of a central aspect of shows / events / communication. How many times have we all glanced at and then pondered over a well-crafted flyer but not kept a copy for ourselves? I really appreciate when folks take the time to capture and retain art and artifacts of our subculture / community—not for the sake of nostalgia (though maybe sometimes I suppose) but because things are always shifting and changing and it's important to be able to look back and see what others did and what we all can do if we push ourselves and try. There is no "history" about any of us that matters except the history we write. No one cares to capture our lives and the things that give meaning to them except us, be it in flyers we constructed or in the photos we took and cast aside, unsuspecting someone else would pick them up and make us think about them. (KS)
PO Box 3272, Berkeley, CA 94703 / degeneratezine@gmail.com

DEGENERATE #19
$3 (free to prisoners) / 12 pgs
Degenerate #19 has reviews of contemporary hardcore punk bands, an essay about the history of the photocopy, and essays on corporate media and the band Mansion. It's a cut and paste operation, some parts more readable than others. Lefebvre's wordy music reviews continually insist on a false dichotomy between hardcore and punk, exalting punk's "aestheticized lumpen hostility" and decrying hardcore's bluntness and formalistic constraints. Ahistorical generalizations abound. He argues that Antidote's 1983 EP *Thou Shalt Not Kill* exemplifies the reactionary politics and sonic crudity of hardcore. It's a poor example of hardcore's supposedly rigid and primitive formalism. Hardcore was not categorically made by "teens ... [who] learned their instruments in order to play hardcore." Sure, some of the best hardcore was, but many early hardcore musicians' adulation and imitation of KISS and Alice Cooper is well-documented in *MRR* and elsewhere, and Antidote's first record contains many studied guitar solos. Later in the review, Lefebvre locates the genesis of Latino punk in the 1990s as a reaction to '80s hardcore's supposed homogeneity, whitewashing the two Latino members of the very band the essay centers on. I offer these two statements as evidence of the danger of generalizing about a vast genre, especially when a little research could have evinced a better cornerstone for his argument. In reviews of Gag and Uranium Club, he further harps on his shaky thesis about the chasm between punk and hardcore. Gag, in his mind, introduces humor to an otherwise self-serious hardcore tradition. There are countless counterpoints: Urban Waste "B.N.C." and the F.U.'s' tongue-in-cheek cover of "We're An American Band," to name just two. Hardcore is often stupid, but don't say it isn't funny. A review of Uranium Club's *Human Exploration* 12" contains the same contempt for hardcore's forefathers—he commends Uranium Club at the expense of the SoCal sacred cows. No band is beyond criticism, but these reviews belie serious ignorance of hardcore's multi-faceted history. How fitting that Lefebvre calls *Degenerate* a mag and not a fanzine—there is no indication that he is a fan of hardcore at all. (SW)
PO Box 3272, Berkeley, CA 94703 / degeneratezine@gmail.com

GENEVA 13: A ZINE OF THE LOCAL #22
$3 / 60 pgs
A history chapbook on the neighborhoods of Geneva, NY, full of intricate descriptions of how things came to be in this destination city for wineries. This has the feel of a professional report—the writers are really taking you deep into a place. Interviews with local business owners and a community activist round out the discussion of how the place has developed and changed over time, but the more universal piece is the look at the community response to the police shooting of an unarmed Black man named Cory Jackson. It's an inspiring collaborative story of many people coming together to address social justice on a very topical issue that affects many communities across the US. The interview is with a group of collective members of Tools for Social Change, a diverse group of students, elders, activists, and members of the community. Rather than this interview addressing the police brutality, it's more of an illumination of the transformative power of bringing people together to address problems and how much there is to gain from activism. (JB)
PO Box 13, Geneva, NY 14456 / mail@geneva13.com

HOPE #2
54 pgs
We've all played that game of "what was the best show you've been to" (in Europe replace "show" with "gig"). You know, a whole zine full of asking punks you've heard of and punks you haven't about that could seem kind of dull, but *Hope* #2 does a great job of getting such a broad range of experiences that I found the simple, clipped recollections as real to me as the incredibly detailed recall done by others. There are a lot of memories over many decades here and it hammers home again and again (in the viewers' own words) what the power and presence of punk music has been in the lives of people. A lot of the bands and events referenced were pretty big ones, but some were not as well-attended, and that's just it—a punk rock show can be important not based on the size of the audience or the venue but on the presence and energy of those attending. It just goes to show you questing punk rockers of the world, hammering out power chords in some basement "gig" with an audience of maybe ten: you might change someone's life. You never know. Also, it's worth noting that proceeds from this zine go to PIKPA, which is an open refugee camp in Lesvos, Greece, that is a "self-organized, autonomous space run by volunteers and is built on the principle of solidarity." This is all pretty good stuff from a B&W, simply constructed full-size zine. *Hope* #2 wont blow your mind, but it might give you some stuff to ponder and seek out more of what can come from the Hope Collective. (KS)
31 Hazel Road, Donnycarney, Dublin 9, IRELAND / niall@thumped.com / hopecollectiveireland.com

JOIE DE VIVRE & NOUILLES EN SALADE
4 pgs
The 41st edition of this zine starts with a rant about the necessity of paper zines followed by an interview with Cleveland's This Moment In Black History and followed by reviews. Honestly, I started to like this wingnutty one-man zine once I got used to the strange formatting. (MR)
vegas666@free.fr

LIFE IN THE SCIENCE PROJECT
12 pgs
This mag is bewildering and brief. A short intro detailing the hopelessness of politics prefaces the heavy-handed rhetoric in the following novella. Short chapters detailing the interactions between a masturbating character named Mr. Sniffles and the Ghost of World Trade Center Building 7 cover the few pages of the total. It's weird and there is no contact information but if you email me via mrr@maximumrocknroll.com I'll send you my copy. (EC)

MOODIEST BABY
2.50€ / 40 pgs
This is a French zine about the author's experience being hospitalized for nearly a month for mental health issues. The zine is organized by daily entries spanning from when she was hospitalized to when she gets out. Interspersed are rules of the hospital, an explanation of her diagnosis, and an explanation of the hospital's layout. As someone who has worked in mental health for a while, I could easily recognize her disappointment at the randomness of care from her various providers as well as her ongoing boredom. It seems like she has a good group of friends that try to stay in contact as well as a mother who seems to genuinely care. Overall I liked the stories, daily struggles, and exposition, yet the zine feels limited by its journal format. There seems to be little difference between one day and the next and I had a hard time keeping up with the folks she met. I understand that this hospitalization deeply affected her but I wished she showed it more in her writing. (MR)
boredtodeathradio@gmail.com / bobby-pins.tumblr.com

PARANOIZE #39
$2 US, otherwise $3 (free in NOLA) / 19 pgs
Paranoize is a long running metal / thrash / hardcore, etc. fanzine. Based out of New Orleans, it celebrates and really clearly loves the city and surrounding region's "underground music scene" (a phrase used frequently). Very standard construction with B&W pages that are side stapled together (love a side staple!) and full of record store ads, short music

reviews, and interviews with such bands as Six Pack, Terminal Nation, Torture Garden, Baghead, and Desecrator. If you love metal and thrash and NOLA, there is likely something in here for you. Frankly, the interviews are so short as to just serve as poor advertisements for the bands,and the record reviews are pretty dull and formulaic. Still, a fanzine is a fanzine and clearly the folks behind this one love their music scene—which is rad. However, I would love to see this zine (and others like it out there) refrain from the use (and thus overuse) of the words "badass," "killer," and "brutal" in the descriptions of music. And as for the exclamation points, let's hold a few back. Give me some diversity of terms to capture the killer brutality of a band's badass shredding. That's all. Otherwise, rock on and I'm excited to check out some of these bands. (KS)
PO Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073 / paranoizenola.com

POTENTIAL FRIENDS #7
$6 / 44 pgs
Potential Friends has consistently been one of my absolute favorite zines. I was stoked to get this issue; a swansong, which does not fall short of being a masterpiece. This is the last ever issue and I am completely devastated. Put together by Midwest native Tyler Bonham (formerly of such powerhouses as Poison Planet, Razorxfade; currently: the Bug) this issue touches on everything from mental illness, to travel, to punk—which ultimately saved him through two years of tumultuous depression. As he candidly writes, he now knows why every song, movie, or poem is about heartbreak: it consumes your entire being. He reminds us that happiness is not a linear process and it's okay to be honest with what you are experiencing. This has been an ongoing theme in my own life and zines this year and it wasn't hard to feel strongly connected to Tyler's words. There are raw confessions about struggling with OCD, all his fears, rituals, and explanations, along with an update on how it has improved since issue six. On the more positive side of the zine, there is a journal of his travels from to the Midwest to the Bay to play Still Not Quiet fest. As a Midwest transplant, I felt so connected to the observations in this zine as well as the dark humor. Please buy this zine and beg him to keep writing. (RB)
tbonham@gmail.com

PUNK LIFE #56/57
$2 / 42 pgs
Despite having a double number, this is actually one issue of this zine. If there's one place I especially don't want to read about electoral politics or how someone has "hope" for one candidate or another, it's in any zine I'm getting assigned to review for *MRR.* Most of this zine is devoted to the author's opposition to the 2015 Landmark Music Festival, which took place on the National Mall in DC, primarily on the grounds that this admission-based event constituted "private" for-profit use of "public" land (by the way, it's all colonized). There's a lot of cumbersome info to wade through, especially for someone without specific interest on the subject, but the author's paper trail, which include FOIA-obtained internal National Park Service emails and interviews with congress people and public officials, is all laid out. I imagine that this is the kind of thing that journalists do. A short review section ends the zine where you can read the author's thoughts on releases as disparate as Taylor Swift's *1989,* numerous current harDCore demos, a new Jon Spencer Blues Explosion record, and a Trouble Funk reissue. (DG)
2601 Sinclair Ave, Suite 9, Concord, CA 94519

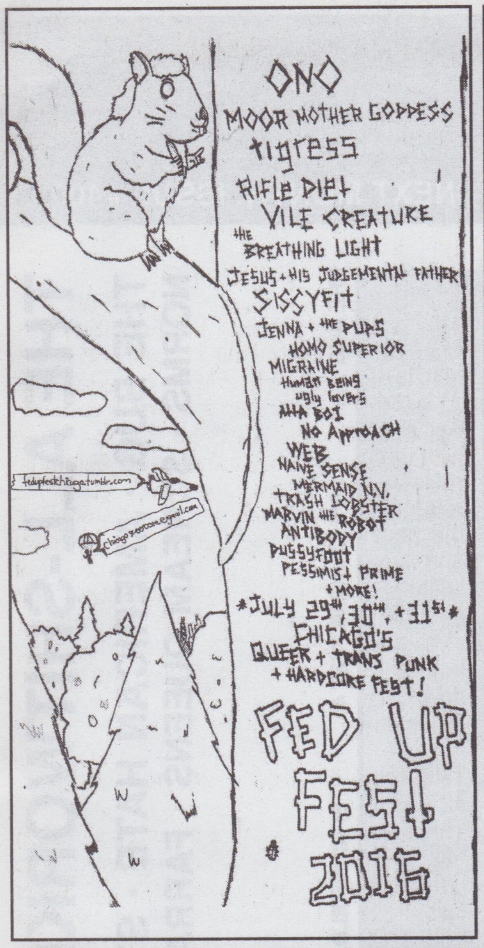
RAZORCAKE #92
$4 / 112 pgs
I'm actually really glad I got sent this month's issue of *Razorcake.* I feel like I got a pretty shitty issue last time and in turn had to give it a pretty shitty review. This one's pretty tight. Tight enough that I'd definitely recommend reading it. There are a couple of cool columns, a particularly badass mini African political primer (!!!), a few boring dude band interviews (and one really good one—I'm a new Downtown Boys fan, I guess), record and zine reviews, and one weird review of a film. I still have a few issues with this zine—like the columns being beefed up with bogus illustrations, sometimes dwarfing the written content, and most of the comics being straight up pointless and intolerable, but hey, these guys make a good read and I should get off my high horse every now and then, anyway. (DZ)
PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042

THE RE(A)D ZONE #29
16 pgs
Cute little French Oi! / anarcho peace punk zine. At first glance, I thought this was going to be terrible. I don't know French and Oi! can suck on an old dead turd as far as I'm concerned, but this turned out to be pretty fuckin' nice! Short-ish interviews with Peruvian Oi! band Sangre Dorada (in Spanish and English), Taxi Driver from France (I assume, since that interview was in French only), and some aging UK anarcho peace punx Lost Cherrees, who I can't believe that I've never heard of before, despite the terrible name. I'm a sucker for old peace punk. If for some reason I also liked Oi!, I'd be pretty fuckin' stoked on this. (DZ)
109 Rue Victor Hugo #7000, Tours, FRANCE

SHORT FAST + LOUD #29
$5 / 55 pgs
This issue comes with the Fuck You Pay Me / To The Point split 7" reviewed in the last issue of *MRR,* and is consequently 7" sized. The sole two interviews are with Active Minds and Six Brew Bantha, along with the usual, albeit condensed, columns, reviews, top tens, and ads. Longtime readers of this zine can expect more of the down-to-earth yet irreverent opinions and stories on things including but not limited to short, fast, and loud music and past/present punk life from the familiar columnists. I've always enjoyed reading this zine, and this issue did not let me down. (DG)
sixweekrecords.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #139
$2 / 40 pgs
This super long running zine (since 1992) has interviews with the Independents (yawn), and a cool Columbia, MO band called Rip Rap. A few live show reviews from Fall 2015, recorded music reviews ,and a few rants. For the love of the sweet baby Jeebus, will some kind soul in Missouri answer the author's call and help him to write better content? He's practically begging on many pages. Oddly enough, since I live in Techville, USA, I learned some new phrases from this zine today: "brat castles" and "entitlement pods." And I sincerely want to personally thank you, dear Boone, for that. (DZ)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205

WISH YOU WERE HERE #11
$4 / 30 pgs
If you sit with it and really study a portrait, you can enter the photo and live in that moment. I did that, with full intention, with most of the pictures in this photo zine. It was nice to get out of my apartment and into a train car, backyard, bedroom, all unfamiliar but with well-worn similarities to punk spaces I've inhabited. There is a story here, but hardly full context to sink into, with the introduction setting the tone of a dear one's suicide. I hear you, friend. I've said goodbye to someone that way in the last year. I see youth, travel, mirth, connection, adventure, and deep sadness. What's nice about this collection is that some of it is actually in color, taking you fully into the fold. (JB)
blackmold.storeenvy.com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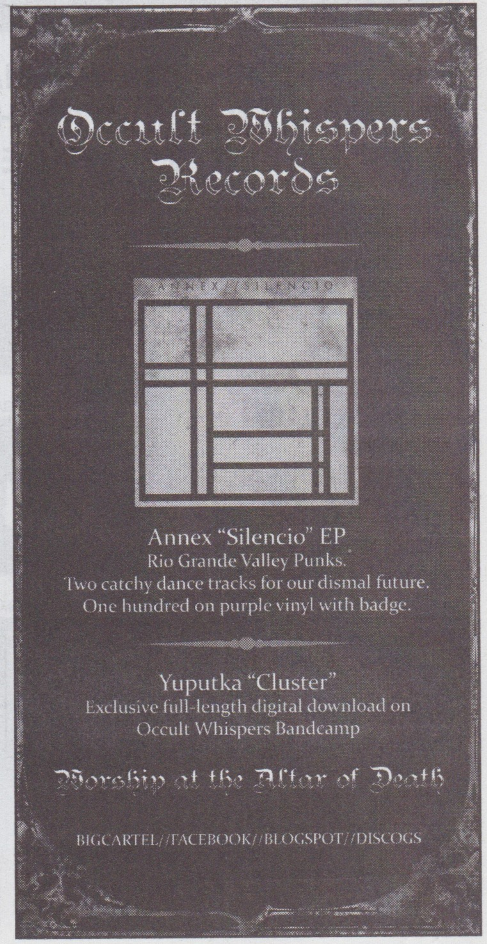
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